

The background of the cover is a photograph of a golden frog, likely a poison dart frog, resting in a metal tray. The frog has a bright yellow-gold body with dark spots and is positioned diagonally across the frame. The tray is metallic and shows some wear and debris.

animals&men

THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY

ISSUE 37

£3.00

**The Golden Frog Project; Mystery Cats in
France; Dragon Sightings; Percy
Fawcett's two nosed dog; News, Reviews,
and more**

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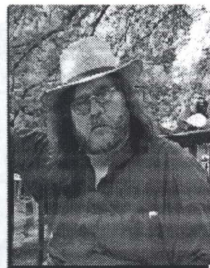
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EDITORIAL

jonathan downes



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first issue of *Animals & Men* of 2006. The CFZ has certainly come a long way in the last fourteen years, and I am very proud of what we have achieved. This year we have a particularly interesting series of events planned.

Chris Moiser, Lisa Dowley, and Richard Freeman will be off to The Gambia in July in an attempt to finally lay the story of 'Gambo' to rest. For those of you not in the know, on June 12th 1983 amateur naturalist Owen Burnham and his family were walking along Bungalow beach when they came upon the fresh carcass of a huge sea creature. It was around 16 feet long with a crocodile like head, four flippers, a bulky body, and a tail. It was brown with a white underside. The jaws had 80 sharp teeth. The animal had no blow hole like a whale and lacked scales. Its skin was rubbery. The description fits no known animal. Owen did not have a camera but took detailed notes and made sketches. These were later published in *BBC Wildlife Magazine*.

Two locals turned up and hacked off the creature's head to sell as a curio. Owen and his family realised the importance of the specimen and buried it above the tide line on the beach where the hot sand would preserve it. We have Owen's map and know exactly where to dig for the creature. We need not transport the whole carcass back to England. If we find it we can take samples and our friend Dr Lars Thomas of the University of Copenhagen can arrange for DNA tests to be run on them.

We are also hoping to return to Loch Ness in the

autumn to continue our attempts at searching for evidence of giant eels. Depending on finances, we may also be returning to the United States at some point as well, probably to liaise with Chester Moore or Ken Gerhard on one of their many projects.

Whilst on this subject, Ken and Lori are presently in Belize carrying out their second expedition in search of the mystery bipedal hominids of the area. We wish them good luck in their endeavours, and want them to know that our thoughts and prayers are with them.

As you can see, the CFZ is very much alive and well as we enter our fourteenth year, and the future looks very bright indeed.

As always we are in desperate need of donations of time, money and expertise. The CFZ makes quite a lot of money but, boy, do we spend it fast! We are currently carrying out research all over the world and every penny earned goes straight into these projects. We do not ask for money for personal gain. We are all capable of supporting ourselves, but if we are to continue our programme of research we MUST have more money and more manpower. If you are interested in cryptozoology (whether or not you are a member of the CFZ) and feel that you can help, send donations via PayPal or feel free to email me on jon@eclipse.co.uk.

Until next time, many thanks for all your support.
God Bless
Slainte Mhor

Jon Downes (Director, CFZ)

THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)

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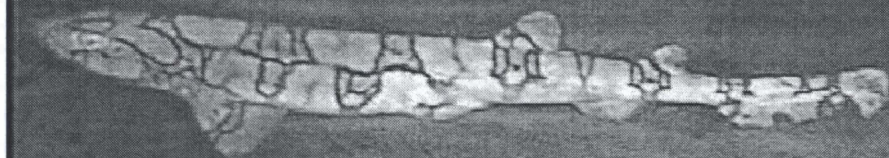
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NEWSFILE

- Edited and Compiled by Jon Downes, Richard Freeman and Mark North -

We're all living with a

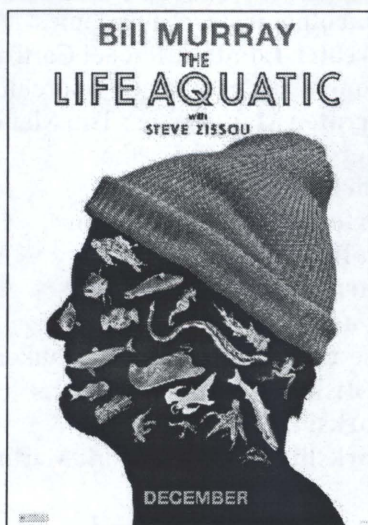
Psychedelic Shark



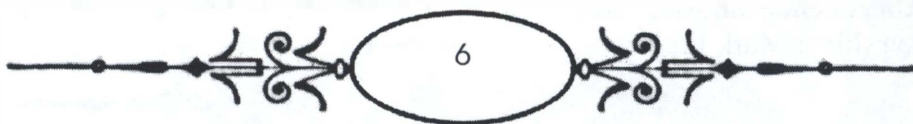
This still photo from a video taken on August 22nd, shows the first visual evidence of the fluorescent chain catshark. Scientists taking part in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Operation Deep Scope 2005 expedition found the three-foot-long (one-metre-long) animal on the sea floor of the Gulf of Mexico.

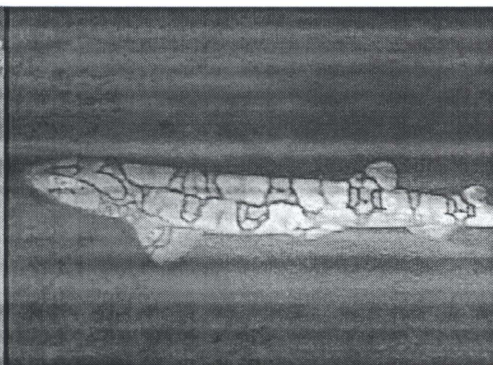
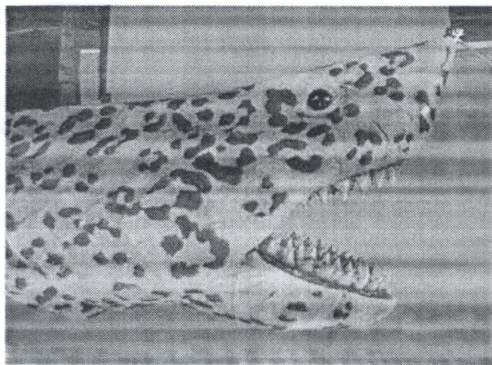
The fluorescent shark was initially observed - though not captured on film - during last year's Deep Scope expedition.

All very interesting - it is a remarkable creature, but what happened next really began to enter forteen territory. The original press release claimed that this new species was remarkably similar to a purely



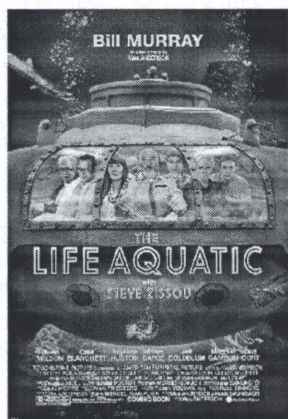
NEW AND REDISCOVERED





imaginary species which swam straight out of Hollywood. They claim that it “*bears an uncanny resemblance to the fictional jaguar shark pursued by Bill Murray in the 2004 movie The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*”

The only problem is, that it doesn't. See above! The fish on the right - the jaguar shark of the film - is a great white that has been given panther-like spots courtesy of those jolly nice folks at Adobe Photoshop, and the fish on the left is the real deal - complete with markings more reminiscent of a reticulated python than anything.



Deep Scope 2005 researchers found this shark

only days before Hurricane Katrina moved over the Gulf of Mexico on August 27. At its peak, Katrina was listed as a Category Five storm, with winds reaching 175 miles an hour (280 kilometers an hour). The expedition ship waited out the storm at a Texas port while research continued onboard.

I may have worked for too long on magazines dealing with conspiracy theories, but there is something slightly weird here. The fluorescent cat shark was actually seen for the first time in the summer of 2004, but the world's press were singularly uninterested in the tale of a bioluminescent killing machine. It is - after all - not the first glowing elasmobranch. The greenland shark - which has been alleged to be a man-eater - is also bioluminescent, and is of more interest to the world press because of its diet and large size. The video which can be downloaded at <http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/05deepscope/logs/aug22/aug22.html>

appears to show a perfectly ordinary cat shark lit up by flourescent lights. So what the heck is happening.

A thorough look at the expedition report gines a possible answer. The page is entitled:

The Day We Found the Jaguar Shark

But the vast majority of the text is a serious scientific resume of the expedition's 'real' discoveries; mostly marine invertebrates, but the piece ends:

"A fairy tale springing to life, a dream come true – how does it feel? One friend of mine said it must be a bit like Enlightenment – one suddenly becomes intensely aware of the whole mysterious Universe existing in this very nick of space and time. Yep! That's how it feels."

Hmmmmmmmmmmmm.

The press release issued at the beginning of the expedition claimed:

"Using advanced technology, we will continue to study these hidden depths, deploying the unobstrusive Eye in the Sea camera for 24 hours, using a variety of cameras and filters during dives with the Johnson-Sea-Link submersible to study polarization and fluorecence in the deep-sea environment, and utilizing new collection techniques to collect live deep-

sea species for study in shipboard labs"

So how could the poor folk at Deep Scope publicise their adventure? Zooanthids with intensely fluorescent polyps fascinate people like the inhabitants of CFZ Mansions, but they leave the mainstream public yawning.

This last bit is mere hypothesis, but has a ring of truth. By their own admission the flourescent catshark ain't even a new species. However the sad decline in quality of the world media is well known to us all. There was no doubt that the fascinating research of the Deep Scope dudes was going to be completely and unjustly ignored (as had the previous expedition in 1994). How better to publicise their endeavours than by employing an immense amount of spin.

It worked for Bush and Blair, so why not?

A spurious link with a movie featuring the irrepressable Bill Murray was all that they needed. Hey Presto! Their expedition was publicised across the face of the planet...

And respect to them for doing so! After all, we released Richard's dragon book on the back of the Harry Potter movie, and if it hadn;t been for the rise in interest of things 'weird' in the wake of *The X Files* nearly a decade ago the CFZ would not be where it is today!

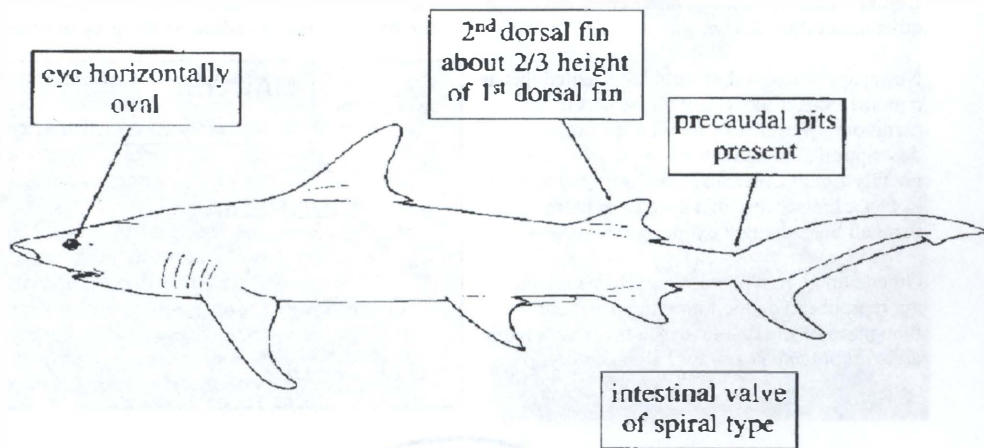
Well done Deep Scope!

Another new shark - this time a proper species - has been discovered in the waters of northern Australia. The new Weasel shark has just been named *Hemigaleus australiensis* in a paper in the systematics journal *Zootaxa*, and is only the second known member of the genus. The description, written by William White of Murdoch University, Perth, Peter Last of CSIRO and Leonard Compagno of the Shark Research Centre, Cape Town, says that the new *Hemigaleus* species differs from its congener, *H. microstoma*, in the presence of a black mark on the tip of the second dorsal fin, as well as having far fewer vertebrae and lots more teeth on its lower jaw. The new fish *Hemigaleus australiensis*, which is a member of the Carcharhiniformes family Hemigaleidae, is known from inshore bays on the continental shelves of northern Australia and lives in water up to 170m/557' deep.

Its closest relative, *H. microstoma*, commonly known as the the Weasel shark or Sicklefins weasel shark, is a small and slender species roughly the same shape and size as the Smooth hound sharks, *Mustelus* spp. native to UK waters, which reaches around 1m/39" in length.

H. microstoma is relatively common in the waters around Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore and has paler fins often with white spots on the tips of the fins and the flanks. It lacks the black mark seen on the second dorsal of *australiensis*.

H. microstoma feeds on crustaceans and cephalopods, particularly octopuses, and is often caught as a food species. For more details on the new shark species see the paper: White, WT., Last, PR. and JV Compagno (2005) - *Description of a new species of weasel shark, Hemigaleus australiensis n. sp. (Carcharhiniformes: Hemigaleidae) from Australian waters.*



BORNEO BEAST

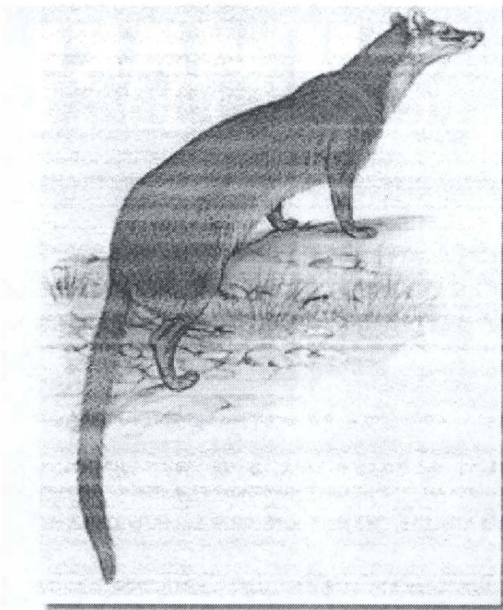
The photograph above (which is copyright to the WWF and reproduced for research purposes) was taken by a camera trap in the Kayan Mentarang National Park in Kalimantan, Borneo in 2003, although researchers have kept quiet about it until now.

Newspapers across the world have hailed this as a momentous discovery of a new species of carnivore - presumably a viverrid of some description although other researchers, most notably Loren Coleman have suggested that it is in fact a rediscovery of a species of palm civet that had been thought extinct for many years.

Other camera trap photos from Borneo, which are reproduced on the following page, are thought to be the first evidence for Hose's palm civet (*Diplogale hosei*) for half a century.

The Hose's palm civet is found on the island of Borneo, in the mountainous forests. This animal is known from only 15 museum specimens, the last of which had been collected in 1955. The Hose's palm civet is dark brown to black on the top blending into a yellow-white, grey or rufous





mystery forever if its habitat is not adequately protected. Kayan Mentarang National Park in Kalimantan, Indonesia, where the carnivore was photographed, is located in the "Heart of Borneo," a mountainous region covered with vast tracks of rainforest that is threatened by a proposed oil plantation that would be the world's largest. Announced in July and funded by the China Development Bank, the plantation would clear 6,949 square miles -- an area larger than Connecticut.

WWF's Heart of Borneo initiative aims to assist the island's three nations (Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia) to conserve more than 85,000 square miles of rainforest in the area.

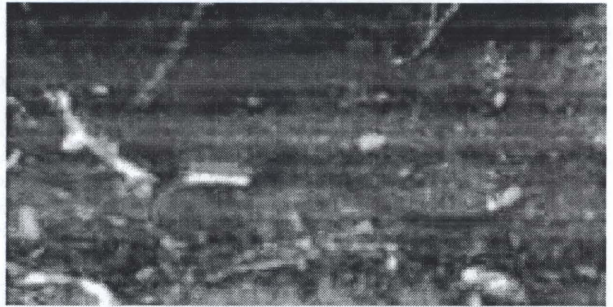
"This discovery highlights the urgent need to conserve the unique forests in the Heart of Borneo. This creature -- whatever it is -- hasn't been seen since the pictures were taken so it likely occurs in very low numbers," said Ginette Hemley, vice president for species conservation.

color underneath. A buff grey patch extends from above the eyes down to the cheeks. The insides of the limbs are a lighter grey, while the rest of the limb is black. The tail is not banded, and solidly dark coloured.

Whether a rediscovery of a known species or a brand new one the discovery of this civet is certainly a major breakthrough.

"We showed the photos of the animal to locals who know the wildlife of the area, but nobody had ever seen this creature before," said Stephan Wulffraat, a biologist who is coordinating WWF's research on this species. *"We also consulted several Bornean wildlife experts and most were convinced it was a new species."*

This strange animal might remain a



CALL ME ISHMAEL



One of the most bizarre out of place animal incidents of recent years - in the UK at least - took place in mid January when a Northern Bottle Nosed Whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*) - a deep water species usually found in the Arctic and North Atlantic oceans and rarely seen in the English Channel swam up the River Thames.

Although those familiar with the biology of the ziphiidae or beaked whales were gravely concerned for the well being of the animal from the moment the story broke, initial media responses were playful and anthropomorphic, but as the news spread that the very fact that such an oceanic species of mammal had swam into fresh water, meant that it was most probably doomed from the outset, the whale became a national obsession.

The coverage on *Sky News* in particular was gripping television as the great beast swam fitfully upstream despite most of the efforts on

the part of the would-be rescuers.

However the whale died on Saturday, 24th January. The 20-foot-long Northern bottlenose whale had been lifted onto a barge by rescuers and was being taken downriver toward the North Sea when it suffered convulsions and died, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said.



OUT OF PLACE



The whale struggled with the effects of being out of the water as it was ferried toward the Thames Estuary, officials said.

"It was a brave, valiant, but ultimately tragic effort to get the whale to safety," RSPCA scientific officer Leila Sadler said.

Swaddled in blankets on the barge, the marine mammal - watched by thousands in London as it spent two days swimming up the murky river past some of the capital's most famous landmarks - had shown signs of increasing stress and stiffening muscles, an indicator it was in serious difficulty.

"The animal suffered a series of convulsions at around 7 p.m. (2 p.m. EST) and died," Sadler said. *"It was already dehydrated, hadn't been feeding and being out of the water would have, in effect, shriveled the animal's internal organs."*

"It was essential to try to take the whale out to

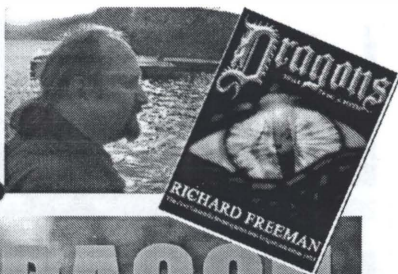
sea on the barge — but there was always the risk this would happen."

A crowd of 3,000 people at Albert Bridge in south London had cheered and applauded as the whale was tethered to a sling and lifted by a crane onto the barge Crossness. Rescue crews were heading toward Margate, on the southern English coast, where they hoped to let the whale back out to sea.



creature feature

THE CFZ INVESTIGATES



ENTER THE DRAGON

Dragons have been raising their scaly heads across Eurasia this summer and our very own Richard Freeman is hot on their trail..

On August 7 the *Epoch times* published a photo claiming to be of two dragons. A photo of two peculiar dragon-shaped objects taken from a plane flying over Tibet's Himalayas piqued many users' interest when displayed on a Chinese website. The photographer is an amateur. On June 22, 2004, the photographer went to Tibet's Amdo region to attend the Qinghai-to-Xizang Railroad laying ceremony, and then took a plane from Lhasa to fly back inland. When flying over the Himalayas, he accidentally caught these two "dragons" in a picture that he took. He called these two objects "the Tibet dragons."

Looking at the photo, these two objects appear to have the characteristics of crawling creatures: The bodies seem to be covered by scales, the backs have spine-like protuberances, and also they have gradually thinning rear ends.

Although the photo caught only a portion of the entire scene, it was sufficient to create the appearance of two gigantic dragons flying in the clouds. This photo, shown on some websites such as post.baidu.com and other forums, aroused the website visitors' curiosity. One person commented, "No wonder that China is the homeland of the dragon! Nature is truly mysterious and powerful, it can always produce spectacular sights beyond people's expectations."

"Is it really true? Is it possible there is an ancient civilization that we don't know about preserved in places that are sparsely populated?"

"It really looks like the dragons in fables, and I really hope it is."

Certainly, most website visitors hoped that someone could confirm the authenticity of the dragons in the photo. In Chinese fairy tales, the dragon is a kind of rare heavenly creature. Fables say that it can conceal or reveal itself. It ascends to heaven in the spring breeze and dives and hides in deep water in the autumn wind. It can promote clouds and bring about rain. It also became the symbol of imperial authority later on; all emperors of previous dynasties self-designated as dragons, utensils were also decorated with dragons.

Culturally, the dragon is the Chinese ancestors' totem. Nearly all races in China had fables and stories with dragons as the main subject, such as dragon boat races, the dragon lantern dance to celebrate holidays, sacrificial offerings to the dragons to implore timely wind and rain for good crops. Whether this kind of creature really exists is still an unsolved riddle. In the previous dynasties in China, there had been many documents recording eyewitness accounts of magical dragons. The most amazing events are the various "falling dragons," dragons that suddenly fell to the ground under peculiar circumstances, and were witnessed by many. A relatively recent tale occurred in the puppet Manchuria regime in August 1944.

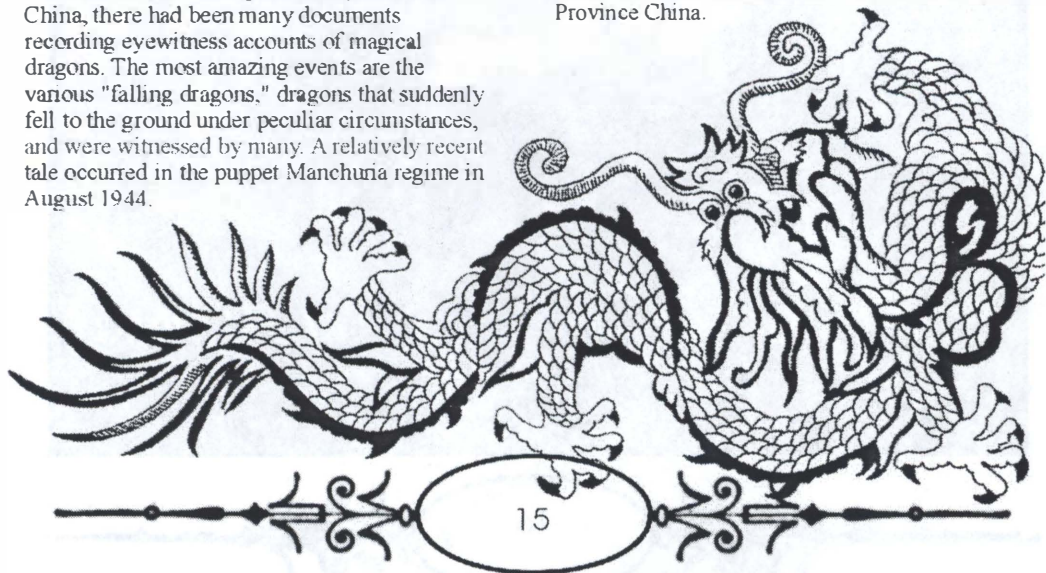
A black dragon fell to the ground at the Chen Family's Weizi Village, about 9.4 miles northwest of Zhaoyuan County, on the south shore of the Mudan River (the old name of a section of Songhua River) in Heilongjiang province. The black dragon was on the verge of death. The eyewitness said that this creature had a horn on its head, scales covering its body, and had a strong fishy smell that attracted numerous flies.

The black dragon was on the verge of death. The eyewitness said that this creature had a horn on its head, scales covering its body, and had a strong fishy smell that attracted numerous flies.

The records from previous dynasties also mentioned the connection between the emergence of these kinds of mysterious creatures, "dragons," and the transition of

dynasties on earth. The appearance of Tibet's magical dragon invites our curiosity and imagination.

On September 12 the *Epoch Times* reported another dragon sighting, this time in Jilin Province China.



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At about 6 p.m. on August 6, two students walked out of their library in Jilin University and looked up. *"Look! A flying dragon appears in the sky!"* A student named Li captured an image of the dragon on his picture-phone, providing the second instance of photo documentation of a dragon flying over China so far this summer.

"When I was walking out of the library, I saw a bright, animal-shaped object flying in the sky, heading southeast. It was incredibly dazzling, just like a gigantic dragon. I immediately took a picture of this unusual event on my cellphone,"

said Li, a student at Jilin University, Jilin province. Li captured what he believes to be a dragon on his phone camera and began passing it around the University two days later. In the middle of the photo is a distant-looking dragon-shaped object, complete with four limbs and a tail. As they were leaving the library that evening, Li's girlfriend Xiaobin suddenly yelled, *"Look! A flying dragon appears in the sky!"* A glowing, red dragon-shaped flying object streaked across the sky, illuminating the evening sky just after the sun had disappeared from sight. Li estimates the object to have been over ten meters long. It was at the altitude of an



Li's girlfriend Xiaobin suddenly yelled, *"Look! A flying dragon appears in the sky!"*

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airplane but was much bigger and flying very fast. At first the flying object radiated a low metallic light. It then became more and more dazzling over the next two minutes before it disappeared into the southeast. *"Seeing the flying object, I instantly took out my cellphone and captured its picture,"* Li said emotionally. He was not the only person to see the dragon that evening. Law students Li Bing and Zhao saw it also. Li Bing said, *"When I was leaving the library, I heard a girl yelling 'Look! A dragon is flying in the clouds!' I looked up, and I saw a red dragon-shaped object flying southeast. After just a minute, it flew away."*

Not everyone agreed with Li that what he had on his cellphone was in fact a picture of a dragon, although everyone wanted to see it. Some students believed the picture to be a UFO or a wave pattern of turbulent clouds at sunset. One student said that it might be formed by rays of light when sunlight reflected off a flying object like an airplane. Everyone has expressed his or her own opinion, but they could not come to a unified conclusion.

Was it really a dragon? One staff member from a nearby observatory says nothing unusual was observed that night. He says that he cannot confirm the sighting because he did not see it himself and not find out relevant documentation.

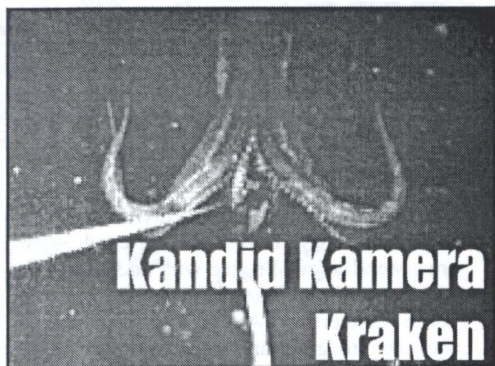
Another type of dragon, far smaller but much more aggressive was reported from Russia. Naked dead bodies are found every year in the dense forests north of Saint Petersburg. The bodies have no evidence of violent death. They are generally folk who have ventured into the forest to pick berries or mushrooms. The police are in confusion. A small piece of land on the Vepskaya Heights has claimed 16 people who died in mysterious circumstances since 1993.

But the casualty list is reportedly longer because some bodies have never been retrieved. Victims are generally found naked with no signs of violence and nothing stolen. Death occur in warm weather from April to October. Victims also seem to 'go insane' before death, stripping of clothes, eating dirt, and throwing away the berries and fungi they have gathered. Sergei Nikitin, senior expert at the Moscow Bureau of Forensic Evaluation think some toxic substance has gotten into the bloodstream of the victims causing massive temperature rise and mental confusion. But local people say they know what killed the hapless berry pickers, a venomous snake resembling the medieval basilisk.

"In the 1980s we got the first reports about some flying snakes living in our bog," says former section head of the natural reserve Vepsky Les (Vepsky forest) Alla Titova. "The snake's bite was reportedly lethal," says she. "According to locals, 'the flying monster' is thought to be a dangerous but an ordinary animal. Locals speak about their encounters with it the way they would tell you stories featuring a bear or a wood grouse.

Amateur zoologists from the research society Labirint do not doubt the existence of the mystical flying monsters. Zoologists have conducted a total opinion poll in the villages of the region for several years in a row.

"Those snakes look picturesque," says Ilya Agapov, a member of a geographical society, and a Labirint activist. *"Male species have the fleshy growth on their heads, it resembles a rooster's comb. Their behavior is pretty unusual, eyewitness reports say they can leap around for a few meters. The snakes can reportedly take long leaps from the trees which they actively use, that is why they were dubbed the 'flying monsters,'"* says Mr. Agapov.



Japanese zoologists claim to have made the first recording of a live giant squid. Although *Architeuthis dux* has been known to science since the mid 19th Century, the only specimens seen were dead or dying.

Researchers set up a special rig, comprising a camera, stroboscope light, timer, depth sensor, data logger and a depth-activated switch attached to two mesh bags filled with bait. Suspended from floats, the rig was lowered into the water on a nylon line, with flash pictures taken every 30 seconds for the next four to five hours.

At 900m, an 8m squid lunged at the bait bag, succeeding only in getting itself impaled on the hook. For the next four hours, the squid tried to get free as the camera snapped away, gaining not only unprecedented pictures but also precious information about how the squid is able to propel itself. After a monstrous battle, the squid eventually freed itself but left a giant tentacle on the hook. When the severed limb was brought to the surface, its huge suckers were still able to grip the boat deck and any fingers that touched them.

The pictures suggest the squid is far from being the "sluggish, neutrally buoyant" creature it has traditionally been deemed to be. The giant squid is in fact an active predator that attacks its prey horizontally, and its two long tentacles coil up into a ball after the strike, rather like pythons that rapidly envelop their prey in their sinuous curves.



A German psychologist is specialising in treating chickens and is helping them deal with problems ranging from gender issues to neurosis.

Barbara Luetzeler, from Bonn, is the country's only chicken psychologist. She says one of her cases involved a hen named Lucie who always wanted to be a cock.

"She was so dissatisfied she'd drive everybody out of her territory, even the cat," the 38-year-old told the *Express* newspaper. Eventually, Lucie settled into her new role and even managed a crow - *"Initially, it still sounded a little hoarse, but very proud,"* she said.

Luetzeler also diagnosed about 2000 chickens with "Autobahn Neurosis" after all of them simultaneously started wagging their heads for no apparent reason. It turned out they were disturbed by the loud noises of the nearby motorway and symptoms disappeared when their owner moved their enclosure to a more quiet spot.

Hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm!

Golden Frog Project

The CFZ have launched (or to be more accurate relaunched) a project that has intrigued me for years. Back in 1997 I wrote the following in my monthly column for *Uri Geller's Encounters*. (This was a late, and not very lamented, magazine published by a bunch of people from Bournemouth. But I shouldn't be churlish, because they gave me my first regular paid work as a fortune scribe):

"In this column I have written on a number of occasions about my search for mythical and semi-legendary beasts. This month, however, I am going to tell the sad tale of how I very nearly caught one! Devonshire is full of folk stories, most of which were almost certainly invented to while away the long winter nights in years gone by. Occasionally, however, you can find one which has its basis in some kind of truth.

There is a charming medieval folk story of a poor woodcutter who lived with his family in the woods near what is now Bovey Tracey. One bitterly cold night, during the middle of a wild thunderstorm his only child was dying of an unspecified illness when there was a knock at the door.

A beautiful lady, dressed in white and surrounded by an unearthly radiance was standing on his doorstep. He invited her in, gave her the best seat by the fire and the few scraps of food that they had. He used their last few sticks of firewood to feed the fire for her, and he gave her his warm, winter cloak to make her comfortable through the night.

The next morning when the family awoke the storm was over, the sun was shining, and their child was miraculously cured but their mysterious guest had vanished leaving a note which told them that henceforth their luck would change and they would become happy and prosperous. In order to remind them of her visit she had magically created a well in which golden frogs were swimming.

The books of folklore go on to suggest that this was a visitation from the Virgin Mary, and note that to this day there is a Mary Street in Bovey Tracey" They were unable, however to explain either the golden frogs or the mysterious stream.

A couple of years ago we discovered a holy well, half forgotten in a wall in Mary Street opposite Bovey Tracey Hospital, and almost simultaneously we began to receive reports of bright yellow and golden frogs from across the westcountry.

At the beginning of July 1997 I was lecturing at a Reptile Fair in Newton-Abbot, and during my talk I mentioned the story of the golden frogs of Bovey Tracey (which incidentally is only about four miles up the road from where I was delivering my talk). After I had finished a rather shy woman called Rosemary came up to me and said:

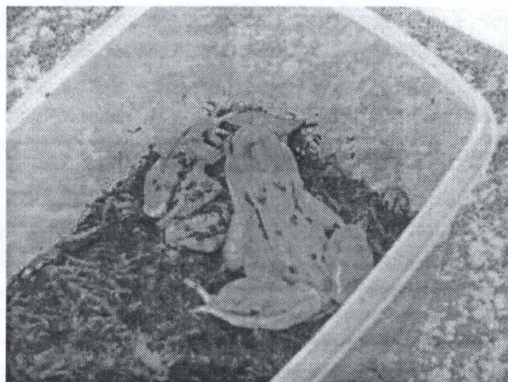
"Um, I'm not quite sure how to tell you this, but I've got a family of golden frogs living in my garden pond!"

The next day, a contingent from the Centre for Fortean Zoology, consisting of me, Graham Inglis and a leather-clad geezer called Richard Freeman (who apart from having the questionable taste to be a 'goth' is a zoology student at Leeds University, and was also once a Zoo Keeper at a well known menagerie in the West Midlands), turned up at Rosemary's house in search of these semi-mythical golden frogs.

Our search was hampered by what seemed to be dozens (but was probably only about four or five) small children who followed us around shrieking with excitement whenever we sighted an amphibian of any colour. We caught at least a dozen frogs of various shapes, colours and sizes, but although we caught several glimpses of what appeared to be a canary-yellow frog hopping around distractedly deep inside Rosemary's shrubbery we were unable to catch

it! Rosemary promised us that she would do her best to catch either this creature or even the bright orange frog that she had seen on at least a dozen occasions during the year so far. At the time of writing we are still waiting, and there is a palatial fish-tank, decked out with a rotten log and some sphagnum moss on my landing waiting to receive any golden frogs that we get sent. However, although, I have various peculiar reptiles and amphibians in terraria on my landing, this particular tank remains empty. I live in hope though!

No-one knows exactly what causes the mutation which has started to produce these remarkable amphibians. Some people claim that they are a direct result of the hole in the ozone layer or indiscriminate use of pesticides, but those of us who have studied the ancient folklore of the region know better don't we?"



Well I have to admit that absolutely nothing came of that experiment. Rosemary singularly failed to deliver the goods, and although we had a mustard-coloured frog in our collection for a few months a year or two later, it escaped. What we did notice however was that after she had spawned, she got gradually less yellow as the months went on.

Then in late September this year we received a photograph...of a golden frog taken only a few hundred yards from where the CFZ now resides in rural North Devon. What is even stranger is the two frogs which are pictured on this page,

they are both unquestionably *Rana temporaria* but their markings are so radically different that they could quite easily be mistaken for different species.

Now, with help from the newest member of the CFZ team, David Phillips (13), who works with the CFZ every weekend, they hope to solve the mystery. David – a keen amateur photographer – is working with Mark North on setting up photo tanks, and together they will be collating the pictures, and they hope to eventually publish

a book detailing the results of the project.

We are hoping to collect a library of pictures of different coloured frogs from across the region. Then we shall try and collate the different markings and colour variations with the environmental factors, and see if

we can publish an atlas of froggy morphology and try to gain some clues as to what causes these variations.

But we want to take the project further. When we find some healthy yellow or golden specimens, we want to see if they breed true, with none of the signs of malformed tadpoles and infertile eggs that one would expect from a harmful mutation. And by the way no animals will be harmed and that all the frogs will be released back into the wild. **Jon Downes**

BIGFOOT NOTEBOOK

Paul Vella



More Turmoil at the BFRO

Following the turmoil within Matt Moneymaker's Bigfoot Field Researcher's Organisation, and the move toward 'safari' style expeditions for those who can afford the extortionate fees, there has been a mass exodus of notable researchers from the BFRO in recent months. For a few weeks, people were either resigning from the BFRO, or were being 'ejected' by Moneymaker. One very good friend of mine only found out he had been thrown out of the BFRO when Moneymaker removed his username from the BFRO reports database, just a couple of weeks after Moneymaker had been a guest in his home!

To put this into some sort of perspective, at the start of 2005, I personally knew around twenty BFRO members. On 1st January 2006, I know just two, including Matt Moneymaker!

I contacted Moneymaker asking him for an interview for this article. He asked for a list of questions before he agreed. When I told him that I would only conduct the interview over the phone or a live chat, and would not provide a pre-set list of questions, he cut off all communication with me. As if things couldn't get any worse, I was directed today to the source code on a BFRO.net page, which let us into the mind of 'The only scientific research organization exploring the bigfoot / sasquatch mystery'. The following text was commented out so that it wouldn't display on the web page, and the comments were later removed from the website, but at the time of writing, are still viewable via Google's caching function.

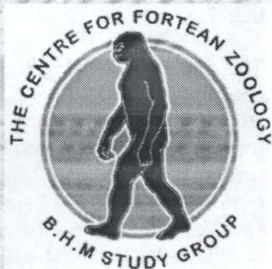
From the BFRO website:

The person who goes by [Name Removed] is basically a transient. Someone on the BFF needs to start a thread asking for his employment history and his resume. Do that and you will find out the truth about [Name Removed]: He's an unemployed bum. If you ever get to see the folks who were ejected from the BFRO, you'll notice something most of them have in common.

They are morbidly obese. At least one has had gastric by-pass surgery, but it has not helped much. They have very few friends outside of public message boards. They need public message boards like the BFF to feel important. They are way, WAY too fat to go hiking anywhere, or do any field research. They're not just overweight. They are morbidly obese. Some would need to buy two tickets to fly on an airplane ...

The fattest, ugliest one of all is "[Name Removed]." Her real name is [Name Removed]. She's an ultra fat trailer trash beast from Arkansas. People who met her at the Texas Conference say she's too revolting to look at. Like most morbidly obese people, they are undisciplined and have a distorted sense of reality.

I don't know about you folks, but I think Mr. Moneymaker is beginning to lose the plot.



Two New Sasquatch Research Organisations.

Where the BFRO fails, two new organisations aim to succeed. The Sasquatch Research Initiative and the Alliance of Independent Bigfoot Researchers have both announced their existence to the world in recent weeks.

Both organisations include a number of former BFRO members, which is inevitable and both organisations take a no-nonsense approach to their research. I have been appointed as Vice-Chairman of AIBR, so forgive me if the rest of this section sounds a little biased. I try not to be, and I have every respect for the members of SRI its creation is long overdue.

I asked one of the people behind SRI to help with this article, who suggested that I described SRI as *"a collection of bigfoot investigators and enthusiasts that are working on setting more stringent standards for investigation and field work in the area of bigfoot sighting reports."*

One thing is certain, knowing a number of SRI members as I do, they won't take reports at face value, and will ensure that they are investigated fully before details are released to the public.

I would recommend that you visit their excellent website at www.sasquatchonline.com for details.

The AIBR is notable for being the first officially declared non-profit organisation dedicated to Bigfoot research. Learning from the mistakes made by the BFRO, it has been set up with democratically elected officers who have set terms of office. Many long nights have been spent by founding AIBR members to create a set of bylaws for the organisation that everyone

found acceptable, and for the first time, the AIBR has agreed standard forensic procedures for evidence capture and preservation, together with a policy of transparency, ensuring that as much information is made available to the public as possible. A comprehensive system of anonymous peer-review and a policy of submitting biological evidence to multiple laboratories with regular control samples to keep them on their feet has been implemented. In the bad old days of the BFRO, it was not unusual for evidence to be examined by their own members, and presented as 'Scientific' this is now a thing of the past.

AIBR is currently recruiting a science-based 'Board of Review', whose task will be to periodically review evidence from, and make recommendations to the organisation. The aim is to ensure that the Board of Review maintains a healthy scepticism. The AIBR website can be found at www.bigfootresearch.com any European enquiries should be sent to me at paul.vella@bigfootresearch.com.

There are of course a number of 'regional' organisations, most notable is Craig Woolheater's Texas Bigfoot Research Centre (www.texasbigfoot.com). Where both SRI and AIBR differ is that they comprise of members from all over the USA and Canada. Their creation is long-overdue, and it is my hope that they will complement each other and have a free-flow of information. The research community has been stalled for far too long by researchers desperately clinging on to their research in the hope of Money-making.

I sometimes wonder whether we are going about things the wrong way. The old premise of collecting reports and investigating them seems to have been done to death. Veteran researcher

John Green has literally hundreds of reports in his files so do the BFRO, and I am yet to be convinced that they do anything except point investigators at an area that had a sighting weeks, months or even years earlier. Research must become more pro-active if it is going to achieve anything.

Malaysian 'Bigfoot' Sightings

The Orang Mawas (people of illusion) or Orang Dalam (people inside) are Malaysia's little-known BHM. *"It looks human but has fur the shades of dark red and black covering its face and body, stands about 4m tall and lets out a loud roar."*

That is how the orang asli villagers from Batu 25, Kampung Punjat Sungai Nadik, in Kahang, about 190km from Johor Baru, described a creature known as *orang mawas*. One of the villagers claims to have had a 15-minute standoff with the creature four months ago. Amir Md Ali said he was catching frogs in the Gunung Pantj jungles to sell when he stumbled upon the creature. *"I was heading to my favourite spot when I suddenly saw this tall creature about 30m away -I was trembling with fear as the creature stared at me,"* he said, adding that he did not move for about 15 minutes. Amir, who initially thought the creature would leave, decided to run when the creature continued to stare at him. *"I did not look back, and continued running until I reached my village,"* he said, showing a clearing in the jungle where the standoff occurred to some 50 people who took part in an expedition to gather information on the sightings in the state.

Another villager, Herman Deraman, 21, had a closer encounter with the creature in the woods. *"I was resting one night in a wooden hut on stilts after a long day of collecting bamboo strips."*

Suddenly, the hut started shaking violently," he said, adding that soon after that, he heard a loud roar that sounded like that of a wild beast.

That incident kept him awake the whole night.

The next day, he encountered the creature again but this time at the place he usually gathered bamboo. *"I thought I saw a tree shaking but after a while, I realised there was a huge creature*

sitting down and rubbing itself against the tree. Luckily, the creature did not see me as its back was facing me," he said.

Kampung Punjat Sungai Nadik is home to about 30 orang asli families who earn a living by gathering and selling produce collected from the jungle. Johor National Parks director Hashim Yusof who conducted a one-day expedition to the area with park officials and press, said the expedition was aimed at ascertaining the truth on the existence of the creature. *"We want to uncover the truth about this creature and also quash any rumour that can scare away visitors to the national park,"* he said, adding that some 124,000 people visited the parks annually. Hashim said they were also compiling a database on *orang mawas* sightings at various spots.



A 40cm to 50cm alleged footprint of the Bigfoot discovered in Mawai, Kota Tinggi, recently. The print was found in mud after a group of workers tracked down the creature to a river

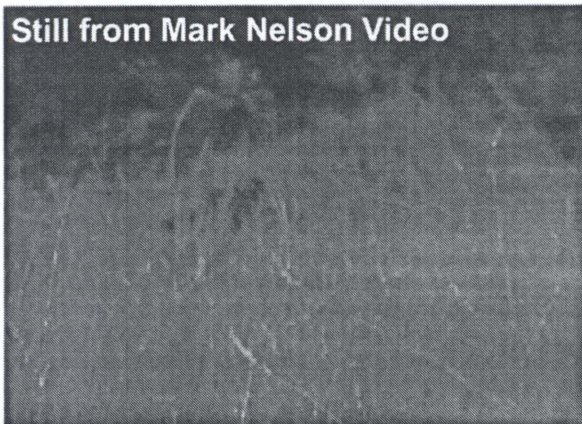
Recent Sightings

November 2005 - Sonoma, California

In November 2005, a young man called Mark Nelson claimed (via his girlfriend's website) to have videoed a Bigfoot in Sonoma California.

"We were driving west on [Rock Pile] Road. We were about fifteen minutes from the [Sonoma Lake visitors center] looking for a place to pull off the road and go hiking. We found a big pullout and

Still from Mark Nelson Video



stopped there. There was a cattle fence along one side of the pullout. There was a deer trail on the other side of the fence heading away from the road. We were hiking along that deer trail when we saw it."

Mark first noticed this figure as it was moving away from him. He had his small camcorder with him in his daypack. He pulled it out and ran toward the fleeing figure and continued videotaping.

It has to be said, that Nelson's story had a lot of inconsistencies, and I am undecided about what it may contain, but during 2003, I spent a little time in Sonoma, which is just north of San Francisco in the heart of California's wine growing region. One thing is for certain, any Sasquatch living in the area would have no shortage of fruit to eat, and it surprises me that there are not more sightings in the area. Sonoma itself is a beautiful little town should you ever go there, be sure to visit the Vella Cheese shop (no relation)

April 2005 Morris County, New Jersey.
Near the town of Riverdale on Route 23, five witnesses claim to have watched a grey ape-like creature climb a rock face, then walk off out of sight.

July 2005 Allendale County, South Carolina
A motorist and his passengers driving from New

York City through the Carolinas on Rte 321 witnessed a "black, hairy, tall thing crossing the road in front of us"

June 2004 Clarke County, Mississippi

On Interstate 59, near the town of 'Enterprise', a two motorists witness an 8ft tall hairy animal running towards them on two feet on a wet rainy night (around 3am).

The Patterson/Gimlin Film.

With so much talk about the PGF in the past two years as a result of the publication of Greg Long's book *The*

Making of Bigfoot, I thought I would treat you guys to an excellent article by Roger Knight. This article was first published on the Bigfoot Information Project website.

How Not to Plan a Hoaxed Filming By Roger Knights

There are many obviously objectionable points associated with the Patterson/Gimlin film. Some skeptics have seized on these as handy sticks with which to pummel it. But one could turn their case on its head and argue the opposite: that even rudimentary planning would have eliminated such predictably problematic stuff.

To wit:

§ "Red-flag" behaviour by Patterson, Gimlin, or "Patty";

§ Bells & whistles - these are costly & troublesome. (Keep It Simple, Stupid.)

Thus, the very fact that so many easy-to-foresee red flags and unnecessary complications were involved implies a lack of foresight, which implies a lack of planning, which implies the absence of a commercially motivated hoax.

Suppose you're planning how NOT to film a successful Bigfoot hoax. You'd be well advised to incorporate these red-flags and risky/costly bells-and-whistles:

1. Don't buy the camera you use. (Although it'll become a valuable artifact.)
2. Allow the rental period on the camera to be exceeded, and be jailed for not returning it on time. (That'll add to your credibility!)
3. Use a better-than necessary (16 mm) camera that reveals objectionable details, like uniform hair length, too long-foot length, etc.
4. Ask along a second witness, greatly complicating things (if he is unwitting), or adding to the expense (if he is "witting").
5. Ask along two third witnesses (ditto). (Track Record #35, p. 4, and #97, p. 2.)
6. Boast that you're going to film a Bigfoot, making your encounter seem non-accidental.
7. Use horses. (They complicate the story, could fail to rear, and add expense.)
8. Have the two witnesses disagree on many details, such as the creature's smell, stride, and height, and whether or not Patterson's horse fell on him, or he slid off it (according to Gimlin). (See Barbara Wasson's *Sasquatch Apparitions*, p. 68.) "Let's get our stories straight" someone amongst every group of plotters utters that classic line, both in countless popular thrillers, and in the real world. Virtually all commercially motivated plotters rehearse. But not P or G so perhaps they plotted nothing. (Note the differences in P & G's stories. They were not forced out of them, they were cross-examined separately, which is the way suspicious contradictions emerge in the tales of conspirators, but popped up the first times they were asked merely to tell their stories by interviewers (e.g., on radio interviews together). Nor were they about minor aspects of the tale they hadn't anticipated being asked about, but were about its central aspects.)
9. Estimate the creature's weight at half of what would be a reasonable guess, and a few years later revise your estimate, causing skeptics to accuse you of unreliability.
10. Don't photograph a human or stick to provide scaling. (Doubt is the result.)
11. Stage the event at a site with the reassuring name of Bluff Creek.
12. Film in a location near a road, where someone might stumble on the crew.
13. Film in an awkward, out-of-the-way part of the country, and hang around the site for over

two weeks before the shot - a waste of resources and time.

14. Include characteristics in the suit that scientists are sure to object to, such as:

§ Features not encountered among female apes, such as a sagittal crest, large hairy breasts, a bulky, heavily muscled torso, and a bold, dominating stride.

§ A human-like stride, not the "lumbering" gait friendly scientists expected, and not different at first glance from the walk of an actor in an ape-suit.

§ A foot length that doesn't agree with the length of stride for a human.

§ No strong directional grain to the hair and little irregularity in hair-length.

§ A light-colored foot-sole, wrapping slightly up around the edges of the foot.

§ A rear-projecting heel.

§ An unlikely, half-human face, like nothing in art or nature.

§ Any type of face. (Showing it would raise objections, and be difficult to make realistic.)

15. Fail to contact scientists who believe in hominids, like Boris Porshnev.

16. Add oddities like a hernia on the thigh and a large skin tag (or tumor) on the breast.

17. Claim a Friday filming, making it impossible to process the film over the weekend.

18. Claim to have done so anyway.

19. Be penny-wise and have the film developed by an unnamable moonlighting camera-shop employee. (Although a "clear chain of custody" is a must.)

20. Show the film on Sunday, an almost-impossibly short time-line, despite the lack of any need for a speedy showing.

21. Show the original print repeatedly to visiting BF buffs, so it will get scratched and scuffed, instead of making viewing copies of the film immediately.

22. Put the priceless film in the mail, instead of hand-carrying it to a developer.

23. Don't invite the press to the dramatic first showing, or to the film's processing.

24. Forget the filming speed. (Another gold star on your credibility score-sheet.)

25. Lose the original copy of the first reel, and also all copies of the second reel.

Historical Reports

Once again, the old newspaper archives provide an excellent resource

NEWARK DAILY ADVOCATE.

NEWARK, OHIO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1883.

MAN OR GORILLA?

The Extraordinary Character Who is Scaring Canoeists.

OTTAWA, ONT., Aug. 1.—Pembroke, about one hundred miles north of Ottawa has a lively sensation in the shape of a wild man eight feet high and covered with hair. His haunts are on Pettie Island, a short distance from the town, and the people are so terrified that no one has dared to venture on the island for several weeks. Two raftsmen named Toughy and Sallman, armed with weapons, plucked up sufficient courage to scour the woods in hope of seeing the monster. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon their curiosity was rewarded. He emerged from a thicket having in one hand a tomahawk made of

stone and in the other a bludgeon. His appearance struck such terror to the hearts of the raftsmen that they made tracks for the boat which was moored by the beach. The giant followed them, uttering demoniacal yells and gesticulating wildly. They had barely time to get into the boat and pull a short distance out into the stream when he hurled the tomahawk after them, striking Toughy in the arm and fracturing it. Sallman fired two shots, but neither took effect, the giant retreating hurriedly at the first sound of firearms. It is more than probable that the townspeople will arrange an expedition to capture, if possible, what Toughy describes as a man who looks like a gorilla, wandering about in a perfectly nude condition, and, with the exception of the face, completely covered with a thick growth of black hair.

Below is the earliest known account of a Tibetan 'Wild Man'

The Lima Daily Times.

LIMA OHIO, TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 1891

Bear Shooting in Tibet.

As I drew near I saw a large bear standing in the river feeding on the carcass of a yak. Taking a gun from one of my men I fired at it, breaking its shoulder. When my men saw what I had shot at they turned and beat a hasty retreat, shouting to me to run, that the "wild man" might not devour me. Another shot, better aimed, put an end to the bear, but not to the fright of my Mongols, who even then would not approach. Our failure to skin my prize

nearly broke my Tibetan servant's heart, for by it he lost his chance to secure the gall, a much valued medicine in China, and worth eight or ten ounces of silver in any drug shop. Mongols and Tibetans attack a bear only when they are a strong, well armed party. My having killed one of these dreaded monsters alone seemed a feat of great daring, and the story was told to every Tibetan we met afterward as proof positive of my dauntless courage.—W. Woodville Rockhill in Century.

The Bucks County Gazette.

BRISTOL, BUCKS COUNTY, PA.
THURSDAY, MAY 24, 1883.

—A ferocious wild man is reported to be roaming in the woods of Pulaski county, Va., and making attacks upon people he encounters. He is said to be fully six feet tall, very muscular, and entirely naked, with long matted hair and beard. He has been pursued by parties, but he was too fleet of foot for them. A man found benton to death in the woods is believed to have been killed by him.

Weird weekend 2006

LIONEL BEER: the search for Camelot
RICHARD FREEMAN *et al*: Gambia 2006 Expedition
CHRIS MOISER: tba
BOB MORELL: The cryptozoology of ancient Egypt
IAN SIMMONS: Space is the Place - Extraterrestrial Mythologies in Modern Music
MATTHEW WILLIAMS: Mystery animals and crop

This year's event will be held over the weekend of 17-20 August, at the Woolfardisworthy Community Centre here in North Devon. Before you all wince and assume that to reach us will be a monumental task, akin to that of reaching Lake Tele in the Congo, let me reassure you. We are only a mile and a half from the main A39, we are 18 miles from Barnstaple Railway Station, but will be running a FREE shuttle service to and from the station over the weekend, and there are plenty of cheap hotels, campsites, and B+B's. We shall be circulating an accomodation list in a week or so, but meanwhile - to wet your appetite - here is the current speaker list for the event:

TIM MATTHEWS: Dragons from a Velikovskian viewpoint
RONAN COGHLAN: The Goatman Cometh
PAUL VELLA: Analysing the Patterson Bigfoot Film

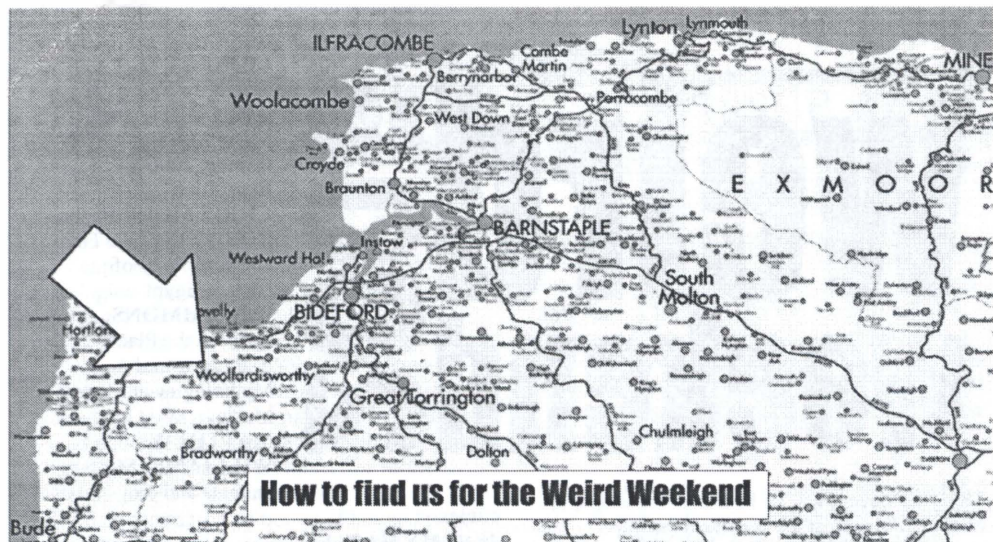
circles
JEREMY HARTE: tba
GORDON RUTTER: Imaginary Zoo - Animal Fakes and Frauds
LARRY WARREN: Rendlesham Forest revisited

Plus Exhibitions and Workshops from:

PAUL CROWTHER AND CHRIS MOISER: Analysing big cat footage (Workshop)
CHRIS MOISER AND MARK FRASER: Hints on practical fieldwork for big cat investigators (Workshop)
ANTHONY JAMES (CREATURAMA): Make your own Monsters (Workshop)
 Creaturama 2006 (Exhibition)
MARK FRASER: Big Cats in Britain (Exhibition)
SAM SHEARON: Cryptozoological Art (Exhibition)



Woolfardisworthy Community Centre



How to find us for the Weird Weekend

OLL LEWIS: 'The Dumbo Squid' - a tool for catching aquatic predators (demonstration)

MATTHEW WILLIAMS: Make your own crop circle (workshop)

FOOLISH PEOPLE THEATRE COMPANY (tba)

CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY: 15 years of the CFZ (exhibition)

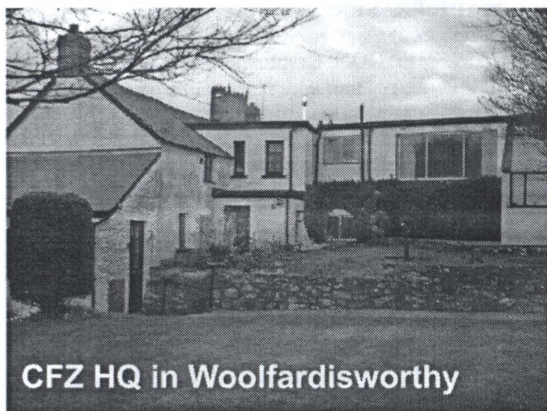
CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY: cfz at the movies (Cryptozoological documentaries featuring the CFZ will be shown throughout the weekend)

The event will - as usual - start with a **FREE** cocktail party at the CFZ on the Thursday evening, and there will be an open house for people wanting to visit us and meet the team all day on the Friday. Doors open at the Community Centre at 6.00 and the speakers will start at approximately 7.30. In line with the new CFZ emphasis on ecology and fieldwork it is hoped that during the weekend there will be some organised visits to some of the locations where there have been recent ABC sightings and to where CFZ fieldwork is currently underway.

More speakers and attractions are at the TBC stage and will be confirmed as being added to the bill in the next few weeks.

Tickets for the three days are £20. Book now to avoid disappointment as numbers are strictly limited. Please make your cheques payable to 'CFZ TRUST' and send them to:

The Centre for Fortean Zoology
Myrtle Cottage
Woolfardisworthy
Bideford
North Devon
Ex39 5QR



CFZ HQ in Woolfardisworthy



MYSTERY CATS DIARY

MARK FRASER

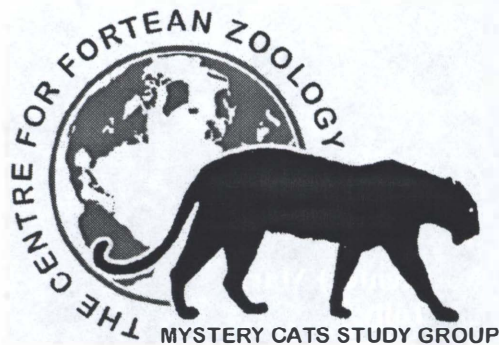
FIELD REPORT

(Somewhere on the outskirts of Monaghan Town, County Monaghan, Irish Republic)

The BCIB research group have just been over in Ireland for four days, we have learned a lot, seen a lot and have a better understanding of what actually happened over there. There has been a lot of rubbish written on the Irish sightings that reached a peak in 2004 (the sightings are still occurring but not getting reported officially because of the fear of ridicule). We will be publishing a report shortly which will clear matters up, but in the meantime here is the account of a sighting we had.

Vigils, along with team members pulling their weight, do work!

20.10hrs



Charlie, McGuinness, John Nutler, Sandy Smith and myself had decided to check out an area that Charlie had told us had previous sightings.

It was getting dark, so after parking up on the roadside we each got a torch. Being the last night, they were nearly all out of charge. We never took any other equipment with us (e.g. night vision) as we thought we were just going to have a bit of a recce.

Halfway through the forest we heard horses running and birds taking flight ahead of us.

After successfully negotiating several electric and barbed wire fences, a steep hillock and a boggy forest we emerged at a clearing below us.

We entered the field below whereupon Charlie began to tell us of a sighting which occurred in the exact spot we were stood in. Basically a farmer out in his tractor was startled by a large black cat running out of the field on his right, running across his path disappearing into the forest in more or less the same spot that we emerged from it. This occurred in July 2004. Also a dead, partially eaten rabbit was found which may have been eaten by the cat.

At that we heard a rumbling, a pounding, I thought a train, but when my torch lit up about 20 pairs of eyes racing towards us, it took me a little time to realise that the noise was horses hooves, and the eyes belonged to a herd that was coming our way at a very great speed. Some one shouted "lets get out of here" and we all turned to run. But then Charlie said stop, and when the horses arrived they stopped

and when the horses arrived they stopped with inches to spare and he calmed them. Phew, our hearts were pounding louder than the horses hooves, as we genuinely thought we were going to be trampled.

We carried on walking along the edge of the field, with the forest to our left, across the field was another row of trees about 200 - 300 yards away.

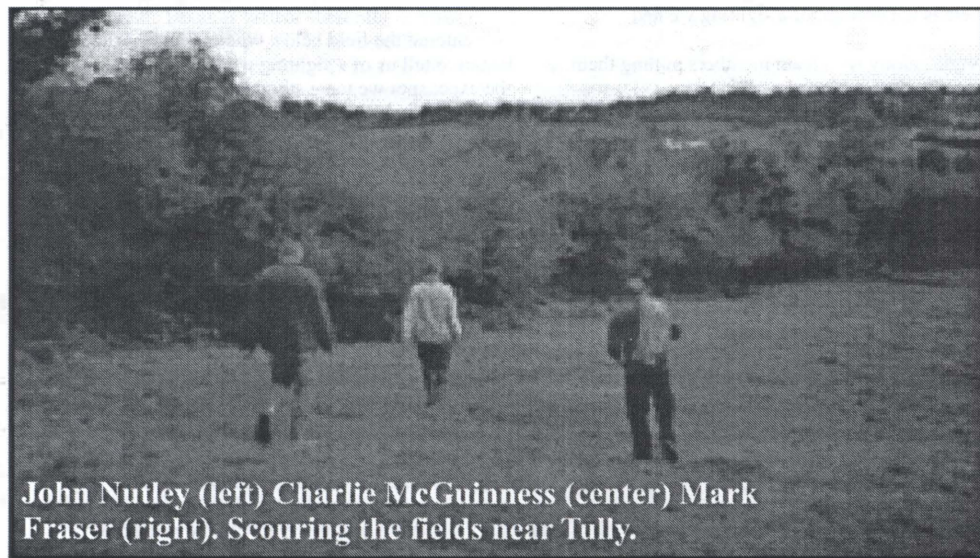
When we first came into the forest Charlie was a little ahead of us, and he now told us that in front of him he could keep hearing twigs snapping on the forest floor, he could not see what was doing it, only that they seemed to be the same distance away, moving ahead of him, and us in the rear. Before we emerged into the clearing the horses did stampede, I am wondering now what made them stampede and what was breaking the twigs, as whatever it was

would have got into the clearing before us.

We reached the far corner of the field (marked on the map below) and Charlie said "whats that" we looked and all saw greeny / yellow eyes that lit up in our torch beam, as our eyes adjusted we saw that these eyes belonged to a sleek jet-black body that was at least three feet long. It slowly dawned on us we were looking at the (or one of them) Monaghan mystery cat, and not only that it was watching us just as intently. With the light we could only just make it out, but we were certain at what we were seeing. It moved another two or three times but only a few feet.

It then moved slowly to the left and stood on its side to us, with its head turned towards us.

We stood there for about four - five minutes and I suggested that we walk slowly across the field, as our torchlights were fast fading and we



John Nutley (left) Charlie McGuinness (center) Mark Fraser (right). Scouring the fields near Tully.

would be seeing nothing, and the stand off was getting us nowhere. As we took about ten steps the cat turned and swiftly shot into the undergrowth behind it.

When we reached the spot we saw that where the cat was stood was a small stream behind it and behind that a barbed wire fence and trees. I looked, I never saw it but John and Sandy did, the cat had not moved far away at all but was stood about 50 feet away. Then it ran off again.

At that a motorbike roared in the distance, we all momentarily thought it was a roar of a cat, then chuckled. It was at that point I noticed the horses had stopped following us and stood in the middle of the field, it was when we reached them, that they resumed walking behind us all the way to the gate, which again had an electric wire running along it which we only noticed in time.

It was decided to come back the next day in the light to check for tracks and any signs that the cat may have left. Unfortunately Sandy and myself were to catch the ferry back early the next morning, so the job was left to Charlie and John (we shall update you if there is any more news).

I never saw the cat when I was crouched on the ground, so close yet so far away! But John and Sandy who did describe it as having a big blunt head and its eyes were set about 6-8 inches apart; it turned and ran. I honestly thought it would have left the area, by the time we got over there, I should have remembered Lincolnshire.

We headed back to the cars, across the fields, even more electric fences, barbed wire and even more

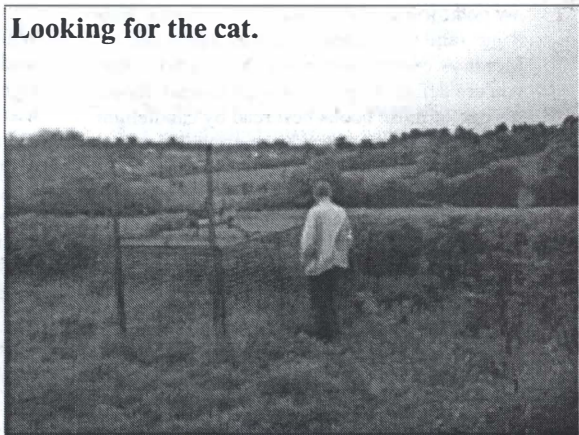
unspeakable things you stand in when it's dark. One or two members of the party were still a little apprehensive not wanting to spend any more time in the dark.

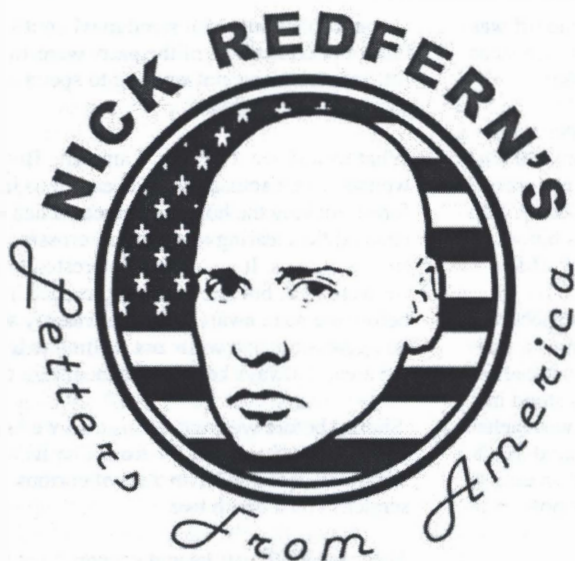
What we did see was a cat, I am sure. But I wonder, did it actually walk ahead of us in the forest, making the horses stampede when it reached the clearing ahead of us, crossing the field before us. It was just as interested in us as we were in it, but knew of our presence long before we were aware of it. It obviously showed no aggression, and while not rushing to leave the area, it always kept its distance from us?

Shortly before we went to this area we had checked out woods not far from Charlie's house. We found at about 7ft up a set of curious scratches on a beech tree.

These were not natural and we could not think of anything that could have made them. They started off with a deep hole, a little wider than the scratch, as if a claw had been dug in, then the scratch marks downwards. Several crossed.

Looking for the cat.





It's official: Texas is weird! Recently published by Sterling Publishing Co., is an excellent new book titled *Weird Texas: Your Travel Guide to Texas's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets*. Written by Wesley Treat, Heather Shade, and my good friend and fellow Bigfoot hunter Rob Riggs (and with Mark Scurman and Mark Moran as executive editors), this is a book that you are definitely going to want to read. Indeed, it's one of those books best read by candlelight on a dark and stormy night, or around a flickering campfire in the depths of the woods.

Covering practically every inch of the Lone Star State, *Weird Texas* contains chapters on ghosts, local legends, heroes and villains from Texan history, haunted houses, ancient mysteries, UFOs, bizarre beasts, and much more, too. The book is superbly put together, and its 280-plus pages are packed with full-color photographs, drawings, and renditions of the

places, people, and creatures described within its packed pages. And, thank goodness, the book contains a lot of much welcome humor, adventure and intrigue that makes *Weird Texas* an absolute joy to read.

As the book states: "With notepads and cameras in hand and steeds of one sort or another at the ready, Wesley Treat, Heather Shade, and Rob Riggs traveled the highways, byways, back roads, and all roads in between in search of the odd and offbeat. They tracked down impossible-to-believe tales only to discover an odd grain of truth that gives the stories just enough credibility to make one feel a little...uncomfortable. Whether it's a goatman, a mystery airship, haunted cemeteries, or bouncing ghost lights, our authors have researched and chronicled the stories and presented them here, for you, fellow admirers of the weird."

While the entire book makes for fascinating reading, and demonstrates the sheer scale of high-strangeness that pervades much of Texas, it was the chapter titled *Bizarre Beasts* that really captured my interest. Written by Rob Riggs, it reveals the incredible wealth of testimony and data in support of the notion that the forests of East Texas (that amount to an incredible sixteen million acres) are home to strange beasts, not unlike the Bigfoot of the Pacific Northwest. Much of Rob's research has focused upon an area of Texas that I have discussed on previous occasions in this column called the Big Thicket, from where countless tales have come of strange, hairy, shambling creatures, of wild

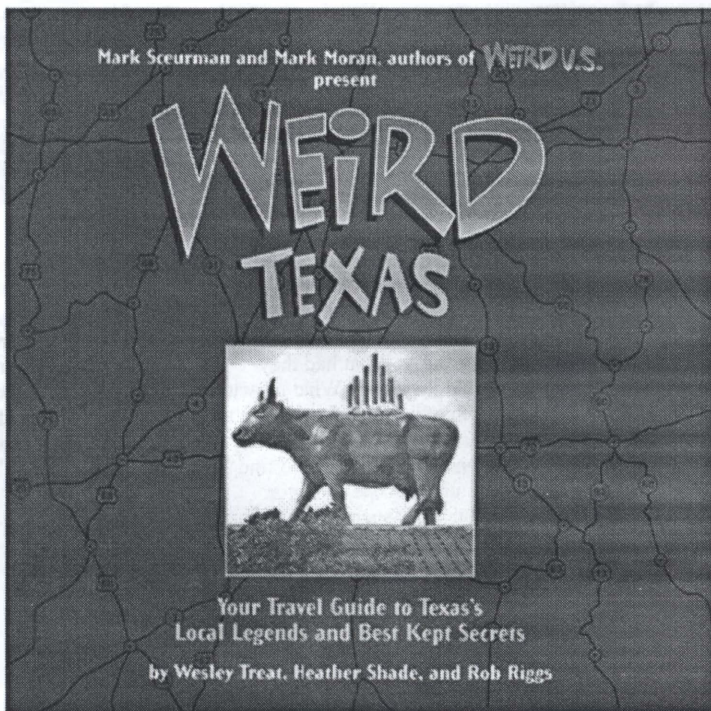
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men, of giant footprints embedded in the muddy banks of rivers, of weird lights in the sky, and much more of a bizarre and entertaining nature. Rob addresses the controversial question of whether Bigfoot is a flesh-and-blood animal or something paranormal – or even, perhaps, a wholly physical beast but one with highly attuned psychic powers. While some Bigfoot researchers are loathe to go down the paranormal path, Rob – to his credit – refuses to ignore what could be crucial data and addresses the whole controversy of what really lurks deep within the Big Thicket. Texas's infamous Goat-Man, that is rumored to haunt the woods around Lake Worth, also features prominently within the pages of the book.

Several months ago, along with cryptozoologists Ken and Lori Gerhard, I spent a day exploring Lake Worth, and the three of us uncovered intriguing data that I will eventually get around to chronicling for you. On the UFO angle, the book contains a superb body of data on the famous Marfa Lights, the Ghost Lights of Bragg Road (where large, ape-like entities have been seen on numerous occasions), the infamous Cash-Landrum UFO incident of December 1980, and Texas's very own Roswell Incident – the alleged crash of a UFO at Aurora, Texas in

1897. Seen by some as a hoax, the tale has nevertheless become embroiled in the collective weirdness of Texas.

The good thing about this book is that it is one that you can read from beginning to end, or pick up and delve into at random – and it will still entertain. And you don't even have to be from Texas to be entertained by this book. If you are even remotely interested in the subjects described above, then you should take the opportunity to purchase a copy right now. Having lived in Texas for the last 5 years, and having visited many of the places cited within the pages of the book, I can safely say that the



team behind the book has done an excellent job of chronicling the genuine oddities (cryptozoological, paranormal and just downright strange) that can be found within Texas.

Weird Texas: Your Travel Guide to Texas's Local Legends and Best Kept Secrets is written by Wesley Treat, Heather Shade, and Rob Riggs. It is edited by Mark Sceurman and Mark Moran, and published by Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., a subsidiary of Barnes & Noble. For further details, see: www.weirdus.com

And on the subject of books: although I'm not usually a fan of cryptozoology fiction (primarily because a lot of it (aside from Lee Murphy's 2001 book *Where Legends Roam* and the work of D.L.Tanner and that of a few other notables is badly written, with one-dimensional, stereotypical characters and poorly defined plots). But *Dark Woods* by Jay Kumar made me re-evaluate my stance. Kumar has written what is without doubt an edgy, atmospheric and genuinely entertaining thriller based around the mystery and legend of North America's most famous man-beast, Bigfoot.

As the back-cover blurb for the book states: "First, the hunters heard the bone-chilling wail that bellowed through the trees. Then they found the blood and the footprints deep-set in the mud, four man-length strides apart. It was something big. It was something angry. What had they wounded? What would they find? What prowled with the brute strength of nothing else known to man? What was alive in the dark woods? Deputy Frank Vaughn is going back in to find out. He lives by the hunter's code of honor: Never leave an animal to a lingering death. But Frank isn't the only one returning to the woods. The evidence of what's hiding there is too compelling for the government to ignore. Too frightening to be exposed. Now there's only one thing more terrifying than what Frank Vaughn is

hunting. It's what's hunting him."

Okay, you get the picture. And there is no doubt that Kumar knows his subject (he specifically interviewed renowned Bigfoot expert Dr. Grover Krantz while conducting research for the book) and his love of the outdoors, wildlife and the environment shines through. But what about the book?

Well, I won't of course give away the story but I will say this: not only is the book very well written and atmospherically charged; it also presents a thought-provoking theory as to why the U.S. Government might want to keep the existence of Bigfoot a secret. This is not, I would stress, for any bizarre, X-Files-type scenario; but for other and far more down to earth reasons that, in the context of the book, make a lot of sense.

The book also travels at a fast pace and the characters (thank god) are believable, easy to identify and empathize with and multi-dimensional.

As for the critter itself, Kumar creates a fine image of Bigfoot that is at various times eerie, thought provoking, majestic, powerful, primal and always mysterious. Set primarily in fog-shrouded woods and within an atmosphere of deep tension, *Dark Woods* is one of those books that should be read by candlelight on a dark and stormy night. *Dark Woods* by Jay Kumar is published by Berkley Books (a division of Penguin Group). It is available in soft-back at the price of \$5.99. Learn more about Jay Kumar at www.jayckumar.com

SHEEP-SQUATCH!

By Neil Arnold

Ed Rollins had always been interested in strange phenomena. As luck would have it he didn't have to go further than his backyard in search of it. There was no need to look to the skies of neighbouring states, or to trudge through the humid forests of a remote country. He'd grown up with the legends, his childhood spent in Gallipolis, across the Ohio River, from Point Pleasant, West Virginia (USA). In high school he'd heard of the red-eyed Mothman entity, and his mother had kept a scrapbook of the cuttings that pertained to the strange events of the late 1960s which culminated in the collapse of the Silver Bridge, causing many tragedies that some connected to the appearance of the eerie winged figure. However, out of high school Ed kind of lost interest in the supernatural, but, as he told WV Ghosts.com, *"...when I returned from a seven year tour in the Navy I rediscovered my interest in the Mothman. I decided that I would use the skills the Navy had taught me to try and disprove the Mothman stories. My logic being that if I tried, seriously and diligently, to disprove the stories, and failed, then I would have strengthened their credibility."*

Ed became fascinated in UFO stories and centered some of his investigations on the eerie TNT area of West Virginia, the location which the dreaded Mothman humanoid seemed focussed upon in the '60s. This area had once been a navy ammunitions plant that made gunpowder. Around this area there was once a high level of weirdness, from strange aerial lights being sighted to odd Men In Black-type figures. However, over the course of a few decades the high strangeness had subsided, the only quirky character of the base being that it seemed to have no official purpose or staff!

During one specific investigation, in an undated Autumn, for a credible UFO group, which took Ed along Bethel Church Road in Mason County, he came across something that perplexed him more than the Mothman and the mysteries that had gone decades before. As he walked the lonely creek he heard something crash through the thickets that flanked the area. At first, due to the lack of wildlife in the area, Ed thought he was about to come face to face with a stray dog or something larger like a cow. It was neither. As Ed remained partly hidden by the trees, he watched in awe and some degree of nervousness, as a whitish-brown creature emerged from the undergrowth. It appeared to move on all fours, its rear end obscured by the bushes as it lowered to drink from the murky water. The critter had two paw-like 'hands', a dog-like head, and two sharp, long, pointed horns upon its head. Ed was

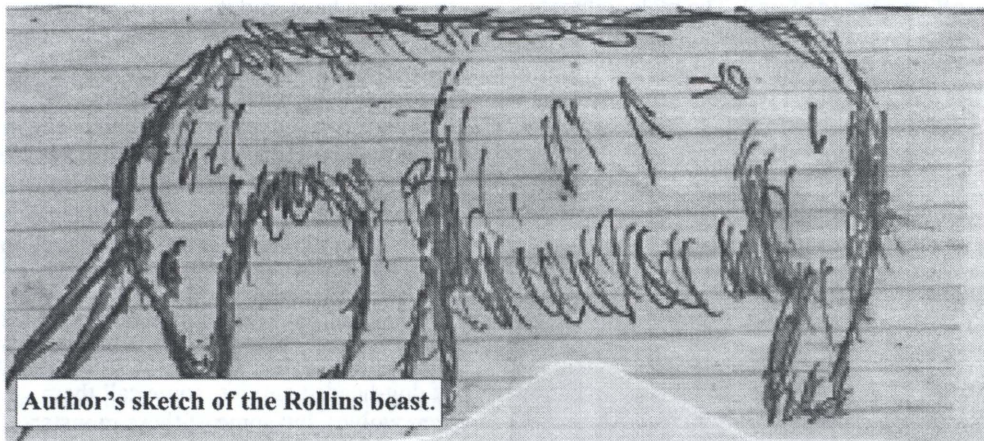
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stunned by what he was watching, a creature he couldn't recognise despite his knowledge and years of hunting in the woods. He felt too scared to turn and scramble away in case the beast saw him, he was mesmerised to the spot. Then, slowly, the form turned and headed off towards Sandhill Road, away from Ed. The critter left behind a pungent sulphuric odour which Ed believed had come from the Red Water in the area. He commented on the website, *"...one of the biggest problems with the TNT area is the pollution from the manufacturing activities that went on there. The Red Water run off is generated by the production of gun powder...anything living in this area should absorb some measure of that scent if they are drinking from these water sources."* So, Ed hurried back to his parked vehicle and the 'sheep-squatch', as it was named, was no more. If only.

An Amy Sharp told WV Ghosts that, *"...one night, about 8:00 pm, my boyfriend and I had to run to the store to get something for his mom. We were on our way back, near Pumpkintown when we saw a car stopped dead in the road. We thought maybe a deer had run out in front of them or something. Then we saw this thing moving down in the ditch...all of a sudden this thing jumps out of the ditch and starts attacking the car. It was bigger than a dog, a lot bigger. My older sister lives right up the road where we saw the 'white beast' but she has never seen anything."*

During the 1990s 'Tess' saw Sheep-Squatch whilst out with two friends. They were returning from a trip to Huntington, West Virginia, via Point Pleasant and the snow had begun to fall heavily. The woods of the back roads had begun to close in when Tess saw the beast, it was only a few feet from the window of the vehicle she was driving. She commented, *"...it had a face very similar to a sheep, horns like a ram, and it was standing upright like a human...my friends started screaming 'What the Hell was that?'"*. Tess bravely backed the car up but the being had begun to amble off into the woods, still walking like a human, but this thing had paws and was white in colour. What Ed Rollins had seen had straight horns, like a Unicorn has, and certainly never walked upright. Had the witnesses seen the same thing or not?

In 1994 a young male witness saw a white humanoid whilst staying at his fathers house in New Cumberland, West Virginia. He was playing outside with a friend when they spotted a creature that terrified them. At first they thought it was a white bear standing on its hind legs. It stood over six-feet in height just fifty yards away. As the boys stood and watched in horror, the monster turned away and sped off into the dark woods, crashing through the bracken and brambles. Five years later the witness saw the creature again. This time he was camping in the same woods the beast had disappeared into previously. It was 2:00 am when the form was illuminated by the campfire glow. It seemed to circle the boys



Author's sketch of the Rollins beast.

and then rushed at them, causing them to flee in terror. As the witnesses emerged from the wood the creature screamed into the air, its shrill shriek filling the night sky. The next morning the witnesses bravely entered the wood and picked up a strange trail. It looked as if whatever had frightened them had carved the soil up.

A 'Melissa' also saw the white monster. She was with her husband driving along Route 35 toward Winfield when the darkness seemed to thicken around them and Melissa became unnerved, hesitantly glancing out of the vehicle window into the blackness of the surrounding woods. Then, fifty yards ahead of the car something stood, on all fours, in the road. It was bigger than a dog, snow white in colour but as the couple approached the phantom, it reared up on its hind legs, opened its mouth and then ran off into the night. A male witness named Brett Hutchinson saw the

creature during Winter of an unnamed year in Four States, West Virginia. He'd been for a stroll in the local woods when, one-hundred yards away on the ridge, he spotted a white monster. It resembled a big bear. Brett crouched in the undergrowth hoping not to be seen but as he attempted to slink away from the creature, it spotted him. The form stood on its rear legs and then bounded away into the thicket.

The creature has also been spotted near Charleston. In 1980, as Spring approached, a couple walking during mid-afternoon encountered a beast just thirty-feet away on a high, hilly path in the local woods. On this occasion the form was black furred bigger than a bear but it had a long bushy tail and the snout of a wolf. It was on all fours at first and gave off a foul odour, but as soon as it saw the couple it reared up to over seven-feet in height, but not like a bear. It never attacked, but instead veered

off up a wooded trail. The male witness, very aware of all indigenous species, claimed it was nothing like he'd ever seen or even heard off but the most peculiar detail was its eerie red, glowing eyes.

During the 1930s and '40s a similar dark-coloured humanoid had been seen mooching around homes in remote parts of West Virginia, but this may have been a Sasquatch relative, something clearly not seen by the witnesses mentioned previously, but what were they seeing? On the 23rd November of an unnamed year, two young men camping in Webster County saw the silhouette of what they claimed was a Werewolf. As the rain lashed down, the two witnesses decided to drive, in their 4x4 to Nicholas County to get a few groceries. Not far from Gauley River they saw the beast. Both men had stopped under the glaring moon for a drink when they looked back along the gloomy path and saw a humanoid figure with a long snout and covered in hair. The witnesses scrambled back into the vehicle and drove off.

Some say the beast is an omen of misfortune. A screaming, banshee-like symbol of a tragedy waiting to occur but this seems unlikely as it's been spotted by many over a wide area without any perilous occurrence following. Some say the beast follows those who walk in the dark woods. They say it's a white furry bear with a human face. Others believe it's a winged entity with glowing eyes, and there are

those who have said it's a werewolf. It is more often white in colour than dark. On the evening December 11th 2003 near Marietta, Ohio, on a well travelled highway, two witnesses in a vehicle saw a beast they described as, "*...a cross between a bear and a deer*", on the side of the highway. It stood on two very thin legs, over six-feet in height, and was covered in dark fur and its eyes glowed red. The monster had a long snout.

Throughout history there have been reports of dog-headed entities, some call them werewolves, but some of these monsters are bogeymen. Their eyes glow, often red and they have the ability to shape shift, to confuse and to never be pigeon-holed as a phenomenon. Many reports are lumped alongside Bigfoot, or Mothman, and they appear all over the world and are not just confined to West Virginia and the surrounding woods, but West Virginia is a very peculiar and eerie place, which is why such reports come to the fore. They also prove that whether these creatures are Mothmen or Sheep-Squatch, they'll always be around in some form, in some clandestine guise and probably are all connected in some obscure way. They'll always haunt the roads and the woods because that's where we unintentionally put them. I'm sure also that they'll never harm us because they aren't undiscovered flesh and blood critters, but something very much embedded in our history. And like wolves among sheep they wander.

THE BLACK BEAST OF MARSEILLES

Matt Salusbury

In the beautiful late summer of 1909, the Alexandre travelling menagerie pitched its big top in la Plaine (a neighbourhood of Marseilles) for the Saint Lazaire fair. Once the fair was over, all the wagons and cages were left at the quay at Forges in the Marseilles harbour, ready to embark for Algiers. We don't know exactly what happened that night, but at dawn, the Sumatran tigress's cage was damaged, and the tigress had disappeared.

Mr Rambaud, the menagerie's big cat handler, declared: *"She is an extremely dangerous beast. During the day you won't see her, but when darkness has fallen, beware! The first person she meets will be sacrificed!"*

That very same morning, the beast inflicted a wound to the scalp of Monsieur Ginoux, keeper of the Saint Marie lighthouse at the end of the jetty at La Joliette, the area round the harbour of Marseilles. A decision was made to search the jetty a considerable undertaking in those days as the jetty at that time was more than 4km long.

Gendarmes, *"armed to the teeth"* searched for the tigress, deployed in foot patrols and also from boats. Volunteer hunters

Experienced in hunting every type of game offered their services and little

Panthère noire : juste une RRRrrrumeur ?

TRAQUE. Insaisissable, la panthère noire des calanques commence à se faire attendre...

"**M**oi, je connais bien les calanques. J'ai été courir malgré l'interdiction. J'ai regardé à proximité des points d'eau mais je n'ai vu aucune trace. C'est le monstre du Loch Ness cette panthère noire..." La faune sympathique et transparente, un joggeur discute avec deux randonneurs sur le parking de Luminy devant l'entrée des calanques surveillée par une poignée de policiers. Le sujet de leur conversation est le même que celui qui agite tout Marseille depuis bientôt dix jours : la présence, dans le massif, de ce qui ressemblerait à une panthère noire. Officiellement, c'est la "suspicion de la présence d'un animal dangereux" qui a amené la semaine dernière les autorités à appliquer le célèbre principe de précaution et à interdire l'accès au massif. Cette "suspicion" est née d'une série de "témoignages de confiance" dont le premier remonte au 29 mai dernier. Des témoignages qui, depuis, se sont multipliés. Aperçu tantôt à proximité du campus universitaire, tantôt à Sugiton, ou encore au Roy d'Espagne, de jour comme de nuit. L'animal aurait été vu par une petite dizaine de personnes. Et, précise Laure-Agnès Caradec, déléguée aux espa-

sils et de cartouches hypodermiques... Jusqu'au 10 juin, la surveillance des points de passage, en l'occurrence les points d'eau, sera renforcée. Les pompiers doivent arroser le sol, très sec, et espèrent y relever les empreintes qui permettraient d'attester officiellement de la présence de l'animal. En fin de semaine, une battue pourrait même être organisée.

ET SI ELLE N'EXISTAIT PAS ? Virtuelle ou bien réelle, la panthère commence en tout cas sérieusement à se faire attendre. Et l'hypothèse qu'elle n'existe pas à se renforcer. Surtout quand on se rappelle que Marseille est spécialiste de rumeur, particulièrement depuis



Et si la "suspicion" n'avait aucun objet...

rowing boats carrying curious onlookers filled the waters all around the harbour basins. Meat laced with strychnine was also left out, resulting in two dogs being poisoned, in addition to the two dogs found partially eaten by the tigress. On 15th September 1909, the animal was spotted and fired on, but she disappeared.

On the morning of 16th there was a "miracle." Animal trainer Monsieur Hendriksen found the body of the tigress floating on the water. An autopsy revealed she had died from wounds inflicted by several bullets and pieces of lead shot. She was stuffed it is believed she may still in storage in one of the local museums.

An unknown songwriter wrote a ballad called *The Song of the Tigress* (*La chanson de la tigresse*) which in 14 verses parodied the police, the Mayor, the pharmacist and the people of Marseilles. Generations of local scouts had a laugh singing the song when they were a bit drunk. [1]

95 years later, history seemed to repeat itself as a mystery feline described as "enormous and black" was seen haunting the coast around Marseilles throughout June 2004. In a spookily similar rerun of 1909, fear of the "black panther of the Calanques" gripped the sweltering city of Marseilles.

The nature trails around the Calanques the local system of fjords, gorges, coves and ravines were closed by park wardens and

police, Black panther sightings continued to be reported throughout June 2004, and once more a force "armed to the teeth" once again including police and specialist marksmen, was assembled.

A collective sigh of relief went out as the black beast of Marseilles turned out to have a perfectly rational explanation. Or did it? The innocent misidentification offered by the local Prefecture raised more questions than it answered. Whatever the reality (or lack of it) behind the officially sanctioned ABC panic of the Calanques, it offers an insight into the workings of one of Marseilles' age-old cottage industries wild rumour, possibly driven by the popular boy scout song *The Song of the Tigress* from nearly a century earlier.

The modern Marseillard 'big cat on the loose' story broke on 29th May 2004 when police and park wardens, acting on reports of a black panther in the Calanques, closed roads and paths to the public, imposing 35 euro fines on any ramblers they found. The paths were reopened after the all clear was sounded, only for a new wave of witnesses reports starting from June 20th to force yet more closures of the Calanques parklands by the Mayor over a three week period.

"Me, I know the Calanques well," said one witness, a jogger interviewed by Marseille L'Hebdo on 9th June 2004 in the car park in Luminy sealed off by a police squad at the time. "I was out running in spite of the ban. I saw it (the panther) from close up at

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the water's edge, but I couldn't find any tracks at all. It's the Loch Ness monster, this black panther."

Police signs put up at road closures bore the words 'Closed due to suspicion of the presence of a dangerous animal,' and one such sign later had the word PANTHER added to it. [2] The more the local press cast doubt on what police insisted were "reliable sightings" the more police and local authority "suspicion of the presence of a dangerous animal" hardened into conviction that a real panther was on the loose. Sightings multiplied, both in daylight and at night near the Marseilles University campus, at Roy d'Espagne, with what a Marseilles Council source described as an "official sighting" by Naval Fire Brigade Major Patrick Albertelli, behind Hospital Nord. [3]

At the end of the scare's first week, around a hundred people were on panther patrol in the mountains around the Calanques, including national forestry commission officials, municipal parkies, police, firemen and the Navy's own fire brigade. Some carried rifles loaded with hypodermic darts, prepared for a beast estimated at 120 kilos. The firemen were soon reportedly in a state of near mutiny, complaining of heat stroke.

This small army of anti-panther forces, now as in 1909 with boats, was continually reinforced up to 10th June. [4] A force of 150 beaters was being

assembled, to drive the panther into the open to be shot.

By this time, as one local commentator put it, the "suspicion that it (the panther) never existed began to strengthen." Meanwhile, rumours sprang up of a "*clandestine circus*" from which the panther could have escaped. "*There really was one, three weeks ago, a circus in (suburban) Marseilleveyre which hadn't paid for its permits, but it was too small to have any animals,*" according to Marseilles Council spokeswoman Laure-Agnes Caradec. She discounted the 'escaped from a private zoo' explanation, but added that it was "very difficult to verify." [5] The anti-panther force was stood down and the Calanques were re-opened on 11th June, although tourists were warned to stay alert. The Calanques were closed once again on 20th June by order of the Prefecture, after a sighting by a park warden that afternoon. Some more senior officers remained sceptical in the absence of panther excrement or any other evidence.

Then, just as suddenly as the 'ballad of the Calanques' had started, a perfectly logical explanation reared its unimpressively small head. An embarrassed Mme Caradec announced on 22nd June that the panther of the Calanques was definitely "*un grand chat,*" a big black domestic cat about 60cm long, [6] spotted in a ravine by a park wardens patrolling in a 4X4 in the Luminy area. The cat was 'not particularly big' and was 'seen making several short, very

ceci, cela et le reste

la photo de la semaine



La panthère des calanques... c'était donc chat !

Les témoins étaient dignes de foi, les appareils photo de la dernière génération et l'alerte, très sérieuse. Tout ça pour un gros matou qui, pris pour une panthère noire échappée d'un cirque clandestin ou relâchée par ses maîtres qu'elle effrayait, a entraîné la fermeture des calanques et l'organisation de battues dont la dernière a été annulée quand le fauve a été identifié grâce à ses oreilles. Mison avaient-ils donc tous la tête ?

graceful jumps, but enough to distinguish that it was not a panther.' [7] Commentators were quick to point out that the official perfectly logical explanation was full of holes, suspecting it was meant to distract attention from a mobilization of marksmen and several shutdowns of their biggest tourist attraction, apparently based on nothing but unfounded rumour and official mass hysteria. The timing of the announcement of a simple misidentification was seen as suspiciously convenient, as if it were a damage control exercise.

The murky waters of Marseilles panther d

information management are muddled still further by a report on the Brit ex-pat website www.expatica.com which ran an Agence France-Presse (AFP) news agency report translated into English on 22nd June but dated the previous day. This claimed that 20 witnesses had come forward to report "an animal that looks like a black panther padding around the area." The article quoted testimony from police officer Antoine Delmas who reported seeing the panther on patrol from a truck, in words remarkably similar to the Nouvel Observateur report

of a cat 'seen making several short, very graceful jumps, but enough to distinguish that it was not a panther.' Except that Officer Delmas stated:

"It was around 50 metres from us in a hollow, well in sight. The truck's engine probably caused it to run off. It made five or six very short, very graceful leaps, but it was enough to see that it really was a black panther, not very big. It disappeared into the bushes..." (my emphasis added.) [8]

So either the Brit expats had seriously mistranslated their copy, or the Marseilles municipal information machine, embarrassed by the national press taking

the mick out of their elusive panther, called off the search even though at least one policeman was convinced that there "really was a small panther" (or some kind of black feline) still out there.

Once the panic had subsided, everyone remembered Marseilles' reputation for its people spreading the most outrageous rumours like the recent one about star actress Isabelle Adjani being hospitalised in the city (she wasn't), or the travelling 'clandestine circus', or fisherman's tales about the sardine that was so big that it blocked the entrance to the city's huge industrial harbour. The striking similarity between the events of 1909 and 2004 show that the bureaucratic mind can only offer a limited set of responses to an ABC panic. The 2004 panic also shows that the information management around ABC panics can turn very political. But there is also something peculiarly 21st century about the 'ballad of the Calanques' and its ludicrously over-the-top response involving police roadblocks and specialist armed units in our post 9/11 anxiety-ridden world of 'non-specific terrorist threats.'

References

- 1: *Revue de CAF*, (mountaineering club magazine,) Marseilles, October 2004
- 2: *La panthère des calanquesc'était donc chat!* Marseille L'Hebdo 23rd June 2004

3: *Panthère noire: juste une RRRrrruneur?* Rémi Leroux, *Marseille L'Hebdo*, 9th June 2004. Marseilles and Lyon are the only French cities to have Naval Fire Brigade units, which include naval conscripts and land-based units. The local conventional Fire Brigade (Sapeurs Pompiers) has many specialist forest fire-fighting units comfortable operating in the deep scrub and forests, often using abseiling gear.

4: *On enterre la panthère?* Rémi Leroux, *Marseille L'Hebdo*, 16th June 2004 described regular anti-panther sea patrols.

5: *Panthère noire: juste une RRRrrruneur?* Rémi Leroux, *Marseille L'Hebdo*, 9th June 2004

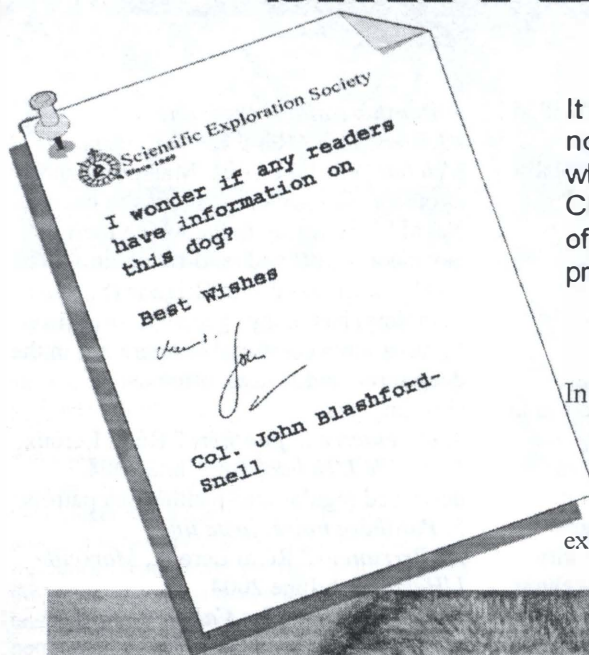
6: *Panthère dans les Calanques qui se transforme en gros chat*, www.web-provence.com, 22nd June 2004. There are contradictory reports about Mme Caradec's job description. Some reports have her as the Province of Marseilles press officer, others said she was the environmental officer responsible for the protection of the Calanques nature reserve. A Google search on her name failed to turn up anything, suggesting she might have been an obscure fall-person.

7: *La "panthère des calanques serait "un gros chat"*, *Nouvel Observateur*, 22nd June 2004 (www.nouvelobs.com)

8: *'Black panther roams S. France beauty spot'* www.expatica.com 22nd June 2004

A similar article appeared in Fortean Times 197, June 2005

A STORY NOT TO BE SNIFFED AT



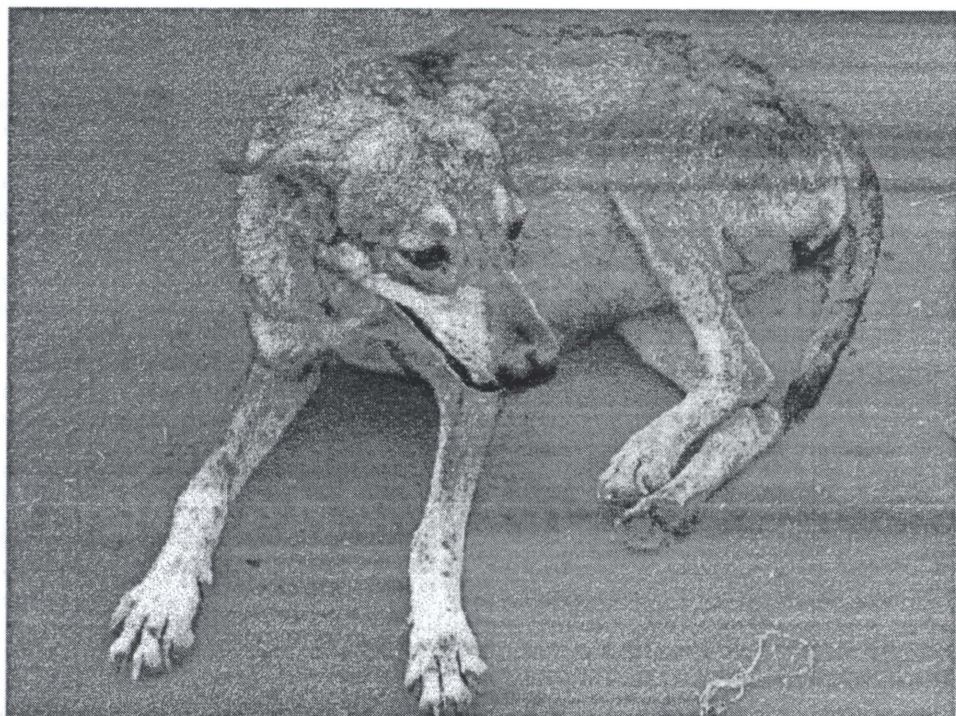
It all started with a hastily-scribbled note from our Hon. Life President which arrived on our doorstep at CFZ Mansions together with photos of a strange looking pooch and a press release which read...

A STRANGE BOLIVIAN DOG

In the early part of the last century when the legendary British explorer Lt Colonel Percy Fawcett, returned from his expeditions in South America, many cast doubt on his reports of extraordinary fauna, flora and people. A

62ft Anaconda that the Colonel shot was said to be a scientific impossibility whilst stories of lost cities and tribes of hairy people were not taken seriously. Fawcett, his eldest son Jack and a friend disappeared in the jungles of the Mate Grosso in 1925 whilst seeking an ancient city he named Xingu. They are thought to have been killed by savages. From time to time there were rumours of offspring from a union with Indian women, but these all proved false. Indeed no proof of the





men's fate has ever been discovered and it remains one of the great mysteries of exploration.

However, at least one of Percy Fawcett's incredible reports may indeed have been true. In 1913, whilst exploring Eastern Bolivia, he claimed to have come across a hunting dog with two noses.

In his book *Exploration Fawcett*, published by his younger son Brian, he describes it:

"Here we saw for the first and only time a

breed of dog known as the Double-Nosed Andean Tiger Hound. The two noses are as cleanly divided as though cut with a knife. About the size of a pointer, it is highly valued for its acute sense of smell and ingenuity in hunting jaguars. It is found only on these plains".

Over the summer another British explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell, Chairman of the Scientific Exploration Society, was leading an Anglo-Bolivian geological survey party seeking a meteorite thought to have crashed into the swamp of Bolivia's

Beni region 30,000 years ago. *"Whilst camping in a remote village, I happened to glance at a dog that was watching me intently from the edge of the firelight. There was something strange about it and moving closer I saw it had two noses. A female, it was in the early stages of pregnancy and seemed perfectly calm and friendly"* reports John Blashford-Snell. *"The dog's owner told me it had been bought as a puppy in the town of Riberalta and it was not a mutant or deformed. It's name is Bella (beautiful) and is said to have come from a long line of such dogs, although the owner admits this one is smaller than usual".*

He explained to John Blashford-Snell that these creatures were highly intelligent and proved to be faithful, courageous guard dogs with a strong sense of smell, whilst being good tempered with humans. They are highly prized although there was a fear that the breed was becoming extinct.

Hunting in packs, John Blashford-Snell was told, the dogs flush out Jaguar (or Tiger as the locals call them) that prey on the villagers cattle. On scenting the great cat the dog will immediately urinate indicating the presence of the raider. Then the pack will close in and tear the Jaguar to pieces.

The dogs are also used to hunt wild pig and armadillo. For mutual protection armadillo often share their burrows with the rattlesnake, but the dogs seem to know this

and will only bark at the hole leaving the owner to bring out the highly venomous rattler with a stick.

Dr Tito Ibson Castro, President of the Bolivian Veterinary Association who has examined the photographs of Bella admits, although he has treated many thousands of dogs, he has never seen one like this. He feels that if more examples can be found a new sub-species might be identified in Bolivia. Dr Ibson is keen to join a future Scientific Exploration Society expedition that will be operating in this area.

So after 92 years Lt Col Percy Fawcett's tale may indeed have been true. Perhaps there is still a giant Anaconda in this little known region

Technical Detail

Bella is 3 years old with a sable coat. Owner claims other dogs of this type vary in colour.

Bella's measurements are:

Tip of tail to noses = 110 cm
Length of head (skull) = 21 cm
Width of head (skull) = 11 cm
Height at shoulder = 47 cm

Larger dogs of this type may reach 70 cm at the shoulder.

The distinctive nostrils do not appear to have been connected at any time.

Bella has had 3 miscarriages.

Log with two noses

After almost a century, the picture that proves Colonel Fawcett's story was not to be sniffed at



Pioneer: Colonel Fawcett pictured in 1911

Paul Harris
reports

WHEN explorer Lieutenant Colonel Percy Fawcett returned from the Amazon basin and told of his encounter with a two-nosed hound, it was dismissed as a shaggy dog story.

But almost a century later, it looks as if he was right after all.

For here - with a snout like a double-barrelled shotgun - is the first picture of a dog that just might be the type Colonel Fawcett discovered in 1913.

It was spotted by fellow explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell during a recent expedition to the same area. And because he just happened to have a copy of Fawcett's memoirs in his rucksack, he recognised it instantly.

Now a new trip is being planned in the hope that vets and canine genetic experts can finally solve the riddle of the dog with two noses. Colonel Blashford-Snell.

Flushing out jaguars

65-year-old chairman of the Eden-liffe Exploration Society, was leading an Anglo-Bolivian geological party in search of a meteorite thought to have crashed into a swamp 30,000 years ago.

"Blashford" as he is affectionately known, is a long-time admirer of the old Colonel and packed his book *Exploration Fawcett*, which also tells of an encounter with a 62ft anaconda.

One night, while camping with his party in a remote village near some of Fawcett's former stomping ground, he happened to notice that a dog was spying him intently from the edge of the foliage.

"There was something rather strange about it," he said. "Moving closer, I suddenly realised that it had two noses."

Through interpreters, the dog's owner told him that 'Bella' had been bought as a puppy and was not mutant or deformed. "He



Double-barrelled hound: Bella has an excellent sense of smell



Fawcett's drawing of the dog

explained that she came from a long line of such dogs, and that they were much prized.

It was only when he learned the breed was known as a Double-Nosed Andean Tiger Hound that he made the Fawcett connection.

And there, on page 183, was a description that precisely matched the creature now before him.

Fawcett wrote in his notes from 1913: "Here we saw for the first and only time a breed of dog known as the Double-Nosed Andean Tiger Hound. The two



Blashford: Plans another trip

noses are as cleanly divided as though cut with a knife. About the size of a pointer, it is highly valued for its acute sense of smell and ingenuity in hunting jaguars. It is found only on these plains."

On the inside cover of the book, compiled by his son from the Colonel's original manuscripts, was a cartoon-style drawing of the beast, just below one of an extremely large snake.

Locals told Blashford that the hounds were rare, highly intelligent, and loyal guard dogs. Not surprisingly, perhaps, they were

treasured for their excellent sense of smell.

In an account that might seem as fanciful as one of Percy Fawcett's tales, they described how the dogs hunted in packs to flush out jaguars (known locally as tigras), which prey on villagers' cattle.

When that unique double snout picks up a scent, apparently, the dog urinates to signal the presence of the enemy. Then the pack closes in on the jaguar, usually cornering and killing it. On their dogs off, incidentally, the dogs like to hunt wild pigs and armadillos.

Despite this apparent familiarity with the traits of the breed, the dogs are seen only rarely in those remote plains and jungles of the Andean Basin.

Dr Tito Ibañez Castro, president of the Bolivian Veterinary Association, examined photographs of Bella and declared that although he had treated thousands of local dogs, he had never seen one like this.

Now he wants to join an expedition that Blashford-Snell is planning for 14 months (after he's sorted out trips to Ethiopia and Chile, that is).

Blashford said: "The most disappointing thing about Colonel Fawcett's expedition was that nobody believed he had seen what he said he had seen. Now, it looks as if it was all true. But until we go back with the experts, we can't say that this animal, and the one he saw, is a new species."

Maybe we'll even find a gift anaconda in the same region."

Born in 1887, Percy Fawcett was one of the greatest adventurers of his age, held by many in the same esteem as Livingstone and Stanley.

At a time when foreign travel was beyond the grasp of ordinary men, his explorations captured the imagination of every child who ever dreamed about what lay in the great undiscovered territories of the world.

With his pith helmet, handkerchief moustache and indomitable spirit, he repeatedly went in search of ancient civilisations and wondrous creatures from the unknown.

But he never returned from his final trip - in 1905, in pursuit of the legendary Lost City of the Amazon. He died somewhere in the Mato Grosso jungles, sporting a mystery about his disappearance which endures today.

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But the Daily Mail got in ahead of us....

Two-nosed dogs? We've sniffed out packs of them!

Dog with two noses

After almost a century, the picture that proves Colonel Fawcett's story was not to be sniffed at



On the scent of a big story:
From Saturday's Mail

By Paul Harris

TWO-NOSED dogs, it seemed were as rare as hen's teeth.

As reported in the Mail last week, one of the few examples was thought to be the so-called Andean Tiger Hound found by explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell in Bolivia.

But now, we can reveal, massily-enhanced canines abound - not least, in Britain.

In Belber, Derbyshire, Pam and Rob Montgomery noticed a similarity between Max, their four-year-old boxer, and Bella, the Bolivian hound featured in the Mail last Saturday.

Max, a rescue dog, has a cleft palate which also divides his nose. 'He snores very loudly and he likes to drink from a running tap,' said Mrs Montgomery. 'But his sense of smell is excellent - he can sniff out a chocolate biscuit from 500 paces.'

In Gungahlin, Cheshire, Lady the nine-year-old collie cross - owned by retired engineer Brian Hulme and his wife Jill - sports a nose which is perhaps more elegantly divided.

'When we first saw her in the dog's home, my wife said it looked like she had been hit with an axe, said 47-year-old Mr Hulme.'

Now, when we're out walking, people comment on what a cute nose

'He snores very loudly'

she has. Perhaps the most spectacular two-nosed example is a rare breed known as a Pachon Navarro, a native of Spain and Portugal.

Henry, about two years old, turned up on the doorstep of the RASC and, mainly curiosity, which British expatriates Richard and Lady Philippa Allen run at Batol, near Alicante, in Spain's Costa Blanca.

He wandered up to our gate one day and has been here ever since, said Mr Philippa Allen, a TV producer from Bristol.

'We called him Henry because he had the same hangdog expression as the bloodhound in the Clement Freud TV ads for dog food.'

'We felt sorry for him because we thought there was something wrong with his nose. But I did a bit of research and came up with the Pachon Navarro as a possible cause.'

'The nose is not just a useless anomaly - the skull itself is formed into two separate channels, with a ridge wide enough to place your fingers in between.'

It's a very lively dog - he spends most of his day chasing butterflies and stones. You can tell he's Spanish



Henry the
Pachon
Navarro:
He lives in
Spain with
English
owners

because when he's not doing that, he's sleeping.

The ridge of the two-nosed dog first arose when explorer Colonel Perry Fawcett said he saw an Andean Tiger Hound on his South American expedition in 1913.

Some contemporaries thought he was barking mad, but Colonel Blashford-Snell's discovery of one in the same region confirmed their existence.

The dogs might be descended from a type of split-nosed pointer taken to Latin America by the Spanish Conquistadors in the 16th century.

Such dogs existed in Spain around that time and were used, like the tiger hound, for hunting.



Left: Max the boxer can sniff out a chocolate biscuit at 500 paces



Right: Lady the collie cross is praised for her 'cute' nose

So Colonel Fawcett is finally vindicated, and Colonel Blashford-Snell has made cryptozoological history (not for the first time). The CFZ sit back with warm glows in our collective heart at our President's achievements, and we all lived happily ever after... (Except for Richard who now wants a two-nosed dog)



weird weekend 2005



If the Fortean Times *Unconvention* is a wine bar then the CFZ's Weird Weekend is sitting back on the sofa with a six-pack and watching re-runs of *League of Gentlemen*.

This year's con was again held at the *Cowick Bart* n pub in Exeter. This year the pub was close to capacity as the event has grown so much over the last three years. Far from the embarrassing early years when speakers rivalled attendees the *Weird Weekend* is now thriving and can lay claim to being the biggest Fortean gathering in the UK outside of London.

There were 14 talks in all but as with anything you are involved in organizing you never have time to truly appreciate it. I missed many of the lectures this year as I was off behind the scenes doing this, that and the other.

Nick Redfern travelled all the way from Texas

to give us two talks. The first was on the Texas Bigfoot. Most of us think of Texas as dessert and scrub but in the east, on the borders of Louisiana there are huge forests and swamps. After the Pacific North West and Florida, Texas is one of the real BHM hotspots in the US.

Nick also spoke about his new book '*Bodysnatchers in the Desert*' (sounds like a 1950's B-movie!) and his theory that the 'aliens' at Roswell were deformed human children used in altitude experiments by the US government and Japanese scientists pilfered by America after WW2. It makes a damn sight more sense than little grey men.

Over from Ireland was one of my favourite Fortean authors, Peter Costello. His books '*In Search of Lake Monsters*' and '*The Magic Zoo*' were benchmark works that inspired a generation of researchers. In his talk he looked back over his distinguished career searching for lake monster in his homeland and in the UK.

Speaking of Ireland I think that when you look in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for said country there should be a picture of Ronan Coghlan grinning cheekily whilst holding up a bottle of porter. One of the weekend's highlights was the talk by everyone's favourite twinkly-p



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eyed rascal. The subject was mermaids. Not high up on the list of beast likely to actually exist I here you cry. Well you could be wrong. Ronan provided a convincing argument for the existence of an aquatic primate. Not quite the fish tailed, blonde beauty of myth but a more ape like beast.

That line between man and beast was also blurred by Jon Hare in his talk on Sumatran weretigers. This was Jon's first ever lecture but you wouldn't know it from listening to him. His was widely regarded as the best talk of the weekend. He covered obscure martial arts from the Sumatran jungle that involve fighting on all fours and thinking like a tiger (Jon must be one of the few westerners to have ever practised this art). Forget the image of a tiger human hybrid this is something much stranger involving beliefs in tiger ancestry and possession by tiger spirits.

On a less threatening note the lovely Gail Nina Anderson looked at the portrayal of fairies in art. She showed fashions. Contrary to the popular image

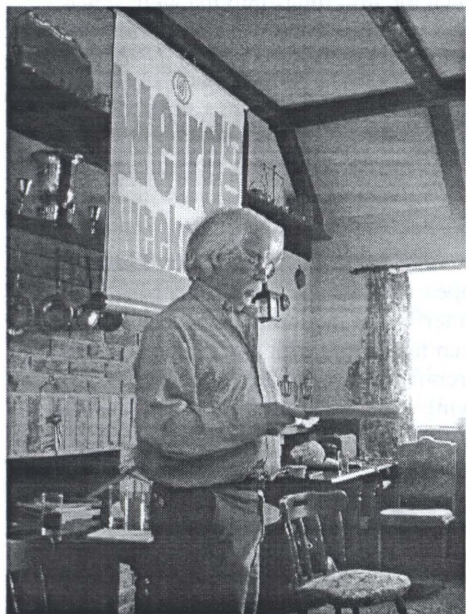
that this was less of a reflection of true fairy lore and rather a projection onto them of the current trends and fashions. Contrary to the popular image fairies almost never have wings and are often both ugly and malevolent. I was however amazed to find out she doesn't like Richard Dad's painting 'The Fairy Feller's Masterstroke', one of the few portrayals of fairies as disturbing creatures.

Chris Moiser (who wandered around carrying a life sized toy panther) examined the forteen fauna of the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. These stretched far beyond 'The Lost World' and included an elephant sized, subterranean bear in the Peak district (I wonder what he had been drinking when he thought that one up?)

My old mate Steve Jones dealt with strange creatures associated with holy wells and springs. These ranged from fish and snakes to dragons and great wyrms. As always he was seen walking abroad with his mighty horn (er drinking horn that is). My own humble offering was a recounting of the CFZ expedition to



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Mongolia.

Some of the treats I missed included award winning author Jeremy Harte on Fortean happenings recorded in medieval literature. Simon Sherwood on black dogs. David Farrar gave us his theories on the nature of the paranormal. Richard Ingram looked at conspiracy theories.

But it wasn't just lectures. John Harrigan gave an intense and disturbing theatrical performance in the alter ego of Dr Bleach. Raised in a graveyard with corpses as friends he went among the audience giving out deformed dolls with messages inside like diseased fortune cookies. The performance was a prologue for *Dark Nights of the Soul*, a six part horror /

cryptozoology / fortene / occult anthology of plays being held at the *Horse Hospital* in London.

Sam Shearon provided a menagerie of cryptid artwork in a jaw dropping display of artwork. The reputedly haunted Monk's Room in the *Cowick Barton* was given over to Sam's amazing paintings of monsters that looked so real that you half expected them to lunge out of the canvass and sink rows of stiletto like teeth into the soft flesh of you face or stomach.

Other delights included Bob and Sid's excellent Apra Book stall, CFZ awards, quizzes, much drinking, a Russian restaurant, and extreme right wing phallic ray guns. And the best thing? Not a hide nor hair of rescue mediums, healing crystals, psychic questing, or guardian angels.

RICHARD FREEMAN





Letters to the Editor

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

ROAD TO VALHALLA

Hi Jonathan,

I heard about your interest in the giant earwig of St Helena - but I saw giant earwigs when I was a child.

I think the year was 1973, and I was living in Guadalajara, Mexico while my parents were missionaries. It was the raining season and we lived in a neighborhood called Ladron de Guevara, on a street called Luis Perez Verdía near the corner of Garibaldi St. At the corner of my street, one house away from ours was a large circled intersection with a fountain in the middle, it was on a grassy mound 1 ½ Meters high and the limestone fountain was

probably over 3 meters in diameter. My friend Vincent "Tico" and I used to play at the fountain and would descend through a trap door next to the fountain to an underground room that had a 4 or 5 meter in depth WELL in it. We would climb down the iron rungs into the well; it was lined with brick and was deteriorating, because there were holes and gaps in the wall, where there was sand and water was pouring through...it was probably dangerous now that I think about it...anyway that's another story.

One day as my friend and I approached the fountain from across the street; I saw what appeared to be a good number of white butterflies at the fountain, I have always been fascinated with things that fly; from aircraft to animals such as birds, bats, flying squirrels (Yosemite Nat'l Park) and insects, I also had a butterfly collection at one time.

So we decided to take a closer look; as we approached the fountain and examined these fluttering insects, we realized that they were Giant Earwigs, I had seen a few "regular" small ones in my grandfathers old garage in san Diego, CA; but I had never seen earwigs of this size, and they could fly!

These were 2 to 3 inches in length and they had the white or pale yellow stripe down the middle of their black bodies, I noticed they had the pinchers at the tail. They were at the wettest edge of the fountain which was either limestone or soapstone (very porous) and they didn't seem to mind the splashing they were getting from the water.

However, what was most remarkable about these insects was the way their tissue like

wings would fold into their open backs almost like retractable landing gear on a plane. As I studied them, I saw the wings folding like an origami accordion and slowly they would flatten to the point where their backs or "covers" would close over them and seal the wings inside; had I not seen them fly I never would have known they had wings. Their wings looked white and somewhat transparent; they appeared extremely thin and delicate; almost like a "wet" tissue or butterfly wing. I was amazed that they could fold and unfold them in such a way and still actually become airborne with them. I supposed that the wings would have to be very thin to fit under their armor in such a way.

There were between 40 to 50 Earwigs at the fountain that day flying around in close proximity to each other, most of them were not flying, less than 10. I did not think about where they came from at the time, but I did not see babies or smaller ones. We assumed they were passing through. It's also a possibility that they actually hatched in the underground section of the fountain and lived there until adulthood; but I don't know. I do not recall any flying off to any great distance while we watched and they stayed close together. We watched them for 30 or 40 minutes before we continued playing.

In the evening we took another look and there were only two or three left; and after that day I never saw them again.

I hope this helps Jonathan.

Thank You,

Bob Borquez
Brentwood, TN 37027

GONE WITH THE BREEZE

Jon:

Nice newsletter! Mongolia! You guys must be living right! And all the books you have available now....that's well done, too.

As for Oll's theory on the Starchild, first let me say that I can't imagine myself blowing him off from asking questions. I sat at that table for the better part of an hour answering questions. He must have come up late, when we were almost through and had to move away for the next speaker. It's just not like me to avoid questions or put anyone off in any way, unless they're being obviously combative, and I don't recall anyone being that way in England. You know that's just not like me.

As for his theory, it slams hard up against the fact that the girl who found both skeletons found them in what can only be described as "pristine" condition. The human skeleton was lying on her back on the surface, so she seems to have taken off her clothes before lying down to die with the Starchild. She would almost certainly have committed suicide, one way or

another. As for the Starchild, its skeleton was found in soil so freshly tumbled that the girl who found it could dig it clear with her bare hands. There is absolutely NO WAY that could be done to soil compacted even slightly by moisture, much less the kind of scenario Oll imagines. Also, inasmuch as the skeletons were both Carbon-14 dated to 900 years old, one has to assume there was virtually no moisture in the mine tunnel (not a "cave" as Oll calls it on occasion) to compact the soil to ANY degree.

Also, one has to question his "silt compacts bone" theory because if that were the case then every fossil ever found would have suffered such compaction, since ipso facto a bone turned into a fossil has been compacted by water and soil in exactly the way he describes! This is almost laughably fundamental when you stop and think about it for only a moment. A fossil is CREATED by being imprisoned in soil damp enough for minerals in the soil to leech into the bone and REPLACE the bone's cellular structure with minerals. Fossils, in fact, ARE mineralized bone (i.e., stone), yet no one I am aware of ever suggests such "flattening" has occurred to such relics.

Bottom line, Jon, is that he doesn't seem to have read the discovery narrative on the websites or listened to me describe it in my speech. You would think if he was considering doing an alternative theory, he would have checked to be sure what the actual discovery scene was like. Based on what he's written, I don't think he did. Pity,

too. He seems an original thinker, the kind we need to bring to bear on problems like this, but he has to do his homework properly to be truly effective.

Hope this finds you and your team flush and fat from a productive summer, and ready to endure another grim winter there in Old Blighty! Can't say I'll be sorry to miss that part of England, but I sure do miss other parts....

Lloyd Pye

SKINHEAD BOY

Jon,

I do not know what this is - it's from the Scotsman, 20th December 1926. It might be a good competition for the next A & M to guess what it was?

Chris Moiser

A STRANGE ANIMAL.

FOUND ON SUSSEX FARM

A SILVER-GREY animal about 30 inches long with a heavy body and head like a rat's was seen near the cottages on Bullock Down Farm, Beachy Head, yesterday morning by an employee named James Bridger who shot it.

The presence of the strange animal whose species is unknown, locally at any rate, is unaccounted for. It weighs about 41 lb. and is about a foot wide across the back. It has short legs with five claws on the fore feet and four on the hind ones. The head is about ten inches long from the tip of the nose to the back. The ears are short and the tail is small.

REVIEWS



The Science of the Alien exhibition

The lights are low and 'bleep bleep squeak squeak' weird 'alien' music plays subliminally in the background throughout, punctuated by the odd Dalek 'exterminate' cry and whistling noises off The Clangers.

The exhibition's opens with Hollywood and sci-fi, which is its least impressive section. A continuous film loop shows clips of film aliens, and it's striking that the 1950s black-and-white *Bodysnatchers* and *They Came From Out of Space* stuff comes off a lot better than more recent tech-heavy *Alien*/*Predator*/*Mission to Mars* nonsense.

There's a rare chance to see the complete Santilli alien autopsy film in all its god-awful rubbish quality blurred, scratchy unedited glory. The film is wrongly described in the exhibition's press pack as 'footage from Roswell.' (It's not- it's footage that some claim to show an autopsy on an alien recovered from around Roswell, not necessarily shot at the Roswell base.)

Science of the Alien is a family show, so the footage has the human-like genitals on the body pixilated out. There's also a cool

case of cultural artifacts around aliens and especially 'grays', including 'Area 51 alien dollar' bills.

The section showing toy "cute" extra-terrestrials, has "proper" aliens sharing space with the human-like foxes and rabbits of Sylvian Families toys. We are told that Sylvian Families and Beatrix Potter animals are really no different from "cute" bug-eyed aliens, which seems fair enough. Getting as much attention as made-up or allegedly real "space aliens" are angels, faeries and the pied piper, and thumbscrews from witch trials - *"In troubled times we invent new demons."* Science of the Alien has a healthy emphasis on the psychology of UFOs aliens, and on what it calls the "Cold War communist = alien" obsession, *"the idea that your friends or even your family could secretly be communists... this fear of the enemy within was projected onto aliens in many movies."*

From a zoological point of view, there's an interesting emphasis on the unimaginativeness of Hollywood alien design, compared to *"the real living creatures in the exhibition .a lot weirder than film aliens - water bears and sea dragons."* Barely naked-eye visible arthropod water bears are equally happy being blown into the upper atmosphere, dropped in acid or boiled. Sea dragons look like a floating piece of seaweed but they're close relatives of seahorses, sea spiders have legs but not much of a

body to speak of, and there are spikey, armoured deep sea horrors, black smokers living off sea vents, tapeworms, salt-and-rock-eating bacteria on electron microscope slides, and CGI renderings of bizarre Cambrian life-forms from the Burgess Shale. The variety of really weird, unlikely life-forms on the most inhospitable parts of our own planet is used as an argument to suggest that alien life could start on other planets too. Examples of terrestrial parallel evolution - with eyes, flight and other useful adaptations evolving several times over, were also employed to suggest that same thing could happen elsewhere. I was so absorbed looking at the pickled tapeworm things that I didn't notice the radio-controlled eyes on stalks Life of Brian-type human-sized alien in a dress with a handbag and a Science Museum pass who had trundled up to me and stood there blinking at me.

There's a brief look at the prospects for life on Mars, Venus, Europa and Titan displayed on TARDIS-type consoles, then the next room has a simulation room with giant horizontal screens showing two computer-generated artificial planetary environments - "Blue Moon" and "Aurelia" - in which randomly generated life-forms interact. "Aurelia" has some kind of umbrella plants that get nibbled at, and giant plankton floating "air whales."

SETI (the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) is skated over in much of the exhibition - probably because the science is the most unlikely - until the last room. The voice of former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim - he of the dodgy war record - was playing when I came in. Mr Waldheim's greetings are part of 1977

Voyager probe's gold LP, which is on display, and playing from beginning to end. You don't often get to hear the complete Voyager LP. There are clips of classical music and babies crying, but most of the LP is the static of different kinds of molecules banging together. The 'ask a question to the aliens' interactive feature is the most disappointing feature - you get to send a message to outer space with your picture on it, but you can only choose from a very limited range of words, "*Have you got our oil?*" is not really a question I've ever thought of asking the aliens myself.

The stated aim of Science of the Aliens is "*to get people involved and engaged . temporary exhibitions pull in audiences,*" and the show will go on tour. It's an all round fun day out and the science is sound enough, but its principle drawback is its cost. Good value it's not. As an adult you're looking at £8.50 for basically three big rooms that you're through in just over an hour.

The Science of the Alien is open until 28th February at the Science Museum, London. A spin-off TV series is on Channel 4 shortly.

Matt Salusbury

***Mauler* by Shawn Williamson
(Hayloft ISBN: 1 904524 37 0)
119pp £10**

The Girt Dog of Ennerdale is one of the most enduring mysteries in the north of England. In 1810 something was loose in Cumbria and killing sheep in a very strange way. Those who glimpsed the nocturnal marauder likened it to a huge dog, hence the name Gurt (great) dog. But the beast had some distinctly un dog-like

characteristics. Witnesses said it bore tiger like stripes along its back. It often just drank the blood of its victims or ate the soft internal organs. Stories were rife that it was some kind of supernatural beast. Indeed it's uncanny ability to avoid being caught and the fear it instilled in normally courageous hounds was strange.

Some years ago I wrote an article in *Animals & Men* in which I postulated that the only animal that fitted the Gird Dog's description was the Thylacine, a striped, wolf like, flesh eating marsupial.

Discovered only in 1805 on the island of Tasmania this remarkable animal did indeed lap the blood of its prey and preferred soft flesh to thicker meat such as muscle.

My colleague Clinton Keeling, an expert in the history of zoos, told me that several of the traveling menageries held creatures labeled as "tiger wolves". These were almost certainly thylacines. Escapes from these slap dash affairs were common. Could one have got loose in Cumbria in 1810?

The article later appeared on Brian Goodwin's 'Crypto Cumbria' website. Imagine my surprise when, several years later, out of the blue Shawn Williamson rings me up to tell me he has written a novel based on my scribbles! Not only that but he invites me up for the launch in Edinburgh.

A likeable giant of a man Shawn puts you in mind of a shaved, polite Viking. Give him a beard and a sword and you could well imagine him terrorizing Lindisfarne in the 9th century. He has produced an excellent first novel. His writing style is

best described as a cross between Jack London and Arthur Conan-Doyle. The book begins when a certain Captain Potter brings a ship full of strange beasts from foreign lands to the port of Whitehaven.

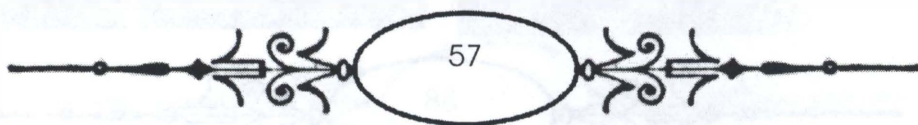
He has a traveling circus and zoo complete with dwarfs, strongmen, monkeys, and lions. But his main attraction is *Cu`chulain*, a striped dog like beast from the distant isle of Tasmania. The captain enters his charge in a dog fight with high stakes and *Cu`chulain* (named after the Irish folk hero) destroys the finest fighting dogs of the local snob Lady Dagobert, costing her dear in the pocket.

In the meantime an engaging character known as Fell Boy enters Whitehaven. He is a feral child who lives on the moors with his pet fox. He is a sort of junior, temperate Tarzan. Fell Boy is on the run after stealing gold crucifixes from some Irish workmen. Fell Boy falls in with Potter and his crew as the pompous Dagobert engineers an animal escape and riot that wrecks the town and turns Potter and his cronies into wanted men.

Fell Boy who has formed a bond with *Cu`chulain* sets him free as the circus flees town. Once loose the thylacine cuts a bloody swathe through the local sheep population and runs rings around those who try to catch him.

The second half of the book is set in Tasmania where Fell Boy, now a grown man with his own son, is trying to avert the wholesale destruction of the island's wildlife and native people. Mauler is a gripping yarn that would make an excellent film and the unexpected twist at the end leaves the story open for a sequel.

Richard Freeman



THE SYCOPHANT



Deep in a cave beneath Loch Ness lives a strange figure who steals ideas from other magazines and then somehow makes them his own.



Last July we held the first official CFZ engagement at our new home in rural North Devon. It was a book launch for the latest titles by **Richard Freeman**, **Chris Moiser** and **John Downes** (the octogenarian father of the esteemed editor of this publication).

It all went swimmingly until the reports of the event appeared in the North Devon newspapers. Jon received a telephone call from an irate **Chris Moiser** who complained that he had been upstaged by both the other authors. **Richard**, he claimed, looked more handsome than him in the photos, and **Mr D** looked younger!

What I think peeved both **Rich** and **Chris** was that the blonde reporter who visited us was as cute as a button and spent all her time with the most senior member of the party when she could have been succumbing to the blandishments of the other authors present...

However, the story does not end there. **Chris** brought along his toy black panther which had featured in his expose of the ABC pictures which had been published in one of the less reputable of the British newspapers earlier in the year.

Everyone seemed to want to have photographs of them alongside the cuddly 'beast' and **Chris** was seen to be deep in conversation with one



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specific scion of the North Devon press for much of the afternoon. What is highly peculiar is that in the intervening six months there have been a whole string of ABC sightings in the woods next to where the aforesaid editor lives! Who said there ain't no such thing as a coincidence.

Following this Chris and his toy panther were inseparable. They appeared at the Weird Weekend in August where the panther (named 'Norman' after the Welsh photographer who claimed to have captured the beast on his camera), was pictured with Ingrid - landlady of the Cowick Barton and a couple of her delectable young ladies.

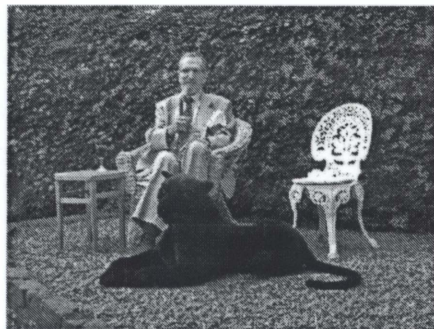
All good fun!

But what is less good fun is the latest revelations from one of the Big Cat research organisations who are NOT affiliated with the CFZ. Last year the management of one of the northern football teams persuaded the head honcho of this aforementioned bunch of pussy fiends to collude in a hoax sighting of a black panther on one their world-famous football pitch. This would have been harmless if the people involved had 'fessed up, but they didn't

which - I am afraid - casts doubt on other public statements from the same source.. Now, guys, we are not in the business of pointing fingers or appointing blame, but this was a bloody stupid thing to do. Fortean Zoology is a fringe discipline at the best of times, and in one fell swoop a bunch of publicity seeking idiots can do a tremendous amount of damage to the ongoing campaign by people like us, and 'Big Cats in Britain' to have the subject of mystery animals treated as more than a not-very-funny joke!

Christmas was strange this year, especially as - for the first time in a quarter century - there were two 'Mr J Downes' living at the family home. Imagine the surprise for Mr D Senior (pictured below with Norman the panther), when he opened a parcel of seasonal goodies from the delectable Gail-Nina which included a postcard for Richard featuring a scantily clad oriental lady and a snake!!!!

Proving (if any proof were needed) that they made 'em tough in 1925, Mr D hardly batted an eyelid, only suggesting that it should be kept out of the way of the housekeeper who brings her kids to work during the Christmas holidays!



THE

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CRYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

BY MARK NORTH

THIS IS AN
EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT,
I BELIEVE I HAVE FOUND THE FABLED
DOUBLE NOSED ANDEAN TIGER HOUND
AS DESCRIBED BY PERCY FAWCETT.
I WONDER HOW DO
YOU SMELL?

SO TWICE AS
BAD THEN

WELL, THE OLFACTORY OR SMELL
RECEPTORS ARE LOCATED WITHIN
SPECIAL SNIFFING CELLS CALLED
ETHMOIDAL CELLS. THESE ARE
FOUND DEEP WITHIN MY SNOOTS IN
STRUCTURES CALLED TURBINATES.



MARK NORTH/CFZ © 2005

LOCATION: BOLIVIA, SOUTH AMERICA

CASE: THE DOUBLE NOSED ANDEAN TIGER HOUND

ON A EXPEDITION TO BOLIVIA, COLONEL JOHN BLASHFORD-SNELL, FINDS WHAT HE BELIEVES IS A DOUBLE NOSED ANDEAN TIGER HOUND, ENCOUNTED BY PERCY FAWCETT SOME 93 YEARS AGO ON A PREVIOUS EXPEDITION.

Typeset by Spoonguard

"..For happy kittens"